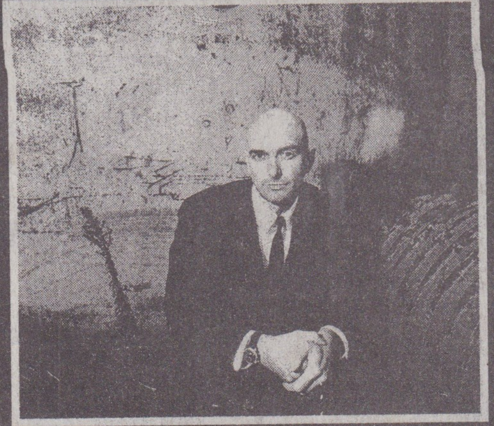
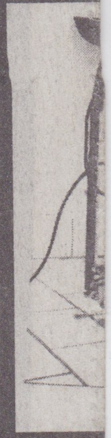
MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

FEB. 2004
$4 #249

FROM ASHES RISE
THIS IS MY FIST
JOHN YATES

PLUS: POINTING FINGER
HAGAR THE WOMB
SKIP JENSEN
GRIDE & MORE!

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL TOP 10

For what it's worth (not much), here's some of the MRR crew's current Top 10 (or so...) lists of stuff we review.

TIM BROOKS

INEPSY-R'n'R Babylon-LP
REMAINS OF THE DAY-LP
NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-LP
FAR LEFT LIMIT-EP / WARCRY-EP
SMALLTOWN-Years, Months-45
BITCHIN'/ONION FLAVORED RINGS-split EP
TEAR IT UP-Taking You Down With Me-12"
COLBOM-Famous Last Words-EP
WOLFBRIGADE-In Darkness-LP
DURANGO 95-CD / TYRADES-live

ROB COONS

CAREER SUICIDE-LP
V/A - Disturbing the Peace -LP
TEAR IT UP-Taking You Down With Me-12"
HAMMER-Raw Tracks 2000-EP
MIND OF ASIAN-EP
BLITZ-All Out Attack-LP
BORN/DEAD vs. CONSUME-split LP
CONTRAST ATTITUDE-Sick Brain-EP
COLBOM-Famous Last Words-EP
TOTAL FURY-live / HANSON BROTHERS-live

ARYEN CURRY

BITCHIN'/ONION FLAVORED RINGS-split EP
SMALLTOWN-Years, Months-45
NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-LP
THE HORRIBLE ODDS-Underground-12"
SCARLET LETTER/SUICIDE PARTY-split EP
COLBOM-Famous Last Words-EP
GRIZZLY ADAMS BAND-LP
LEATHERFACE-Discography Part 2-LP
THE PULSES-10" / WARCRY-EP
SEXY-Por Vida-LP

PAUL CURRAN

COLBOM-Famous Last Words-EP
CAREER SUICIDE-LP / QUEERWÜLF-EP
NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-LP
LEATHERFACE-LP / THE QUICK-EP
THE FALL-Formerly Country on the Click-LP
VORKREIGSJUGEND-2xLP
MIND OF ASIAN-EP / BALZAC-LP
WOLFBRIGADE-LP / BOMBSTRIKE - EP
PHANTOM LIMBS-EP / SMALLTOWN-45
BORN/DEAD vs. CONSUME-split LP

JONATHAN FLOYD

GOT EVICTED, WAS HOMELESS, NOW HE'S NOT, BUT STILL NO TOP TEN THIS MONTH.

JEFF HEERMANN

AVENGERS-Zero Hour-LP
FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-Tick Tick-45
MR. CALIFORNIA & THE STATE POLICE-12"
WEIRDOS-live
PHANTOM LIMBS-Hot Knives & Hornets-EP
THE FALL-Formerly Country on the Click-LP
THE EMMAS-I Hate People-EP
CAREER SUICIDE-LP
THE VECTORS-Still III-LP
BLITZ-All Out Attack-LP

KENNY KAOS

HIGH SCHOOL ROCKERS/DEAD CITY REBELS-split EP
GIVE-UPS / THE RADIO BEATS-split EP
THE PUT-ONS-Get Your Kicks-45
THE WINKS-Spoil Me-EP
THE CHECKERS-You Don't Wanna Know-45
THE HARD FEELINGS-100 Miles an Hour-45
SMALLTOWN-Years, Months-45
WESTERN ADDICTION-EP
GRIZZLY ADAMS BAND-LP
THE VECTORS-Still III-LP

CAROLYN KEDDY

MR. CALIFORNIA & THE STATE POLICE- EPs
MOTO-Spiral Slouch-EP
CAREER SUICIDE-LP
THE FUSE-Fisherman's Wife-LP
FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-LP & EP
THE EMMAS-I Hate People-EP
THE CHECKERS-You Don't Wanna Know-45
THE WINKS-Spoil Me-EP
AVENGERS-Zero Hour-LP
TYRADES/FM KNIVES / SMIRK-live

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Let us know which issue to start with!

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE:
#148, 150-151, 153-154, 156 pt. 1, 156 pt. 2, 159-163, 166, 168-172, 174-175, 178-181, 184-210, 213-227, 229-248 are as stated above in subscription info. See page after next.

DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUE:
Scene Reports: continuously, with photos!
Interviews: continuously, with photos!
Ad Reservations: call to make sure.

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We will not accept major label or related ads, or ads for comps that include major label bands. We reserve the right to refuse ads for any reason at any time. Send ads on paper, properly sized, or as TIFFs at 300 dpi—payment by mail.

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(use this mainly for comments & letters. Use phone for ads & other business stuff)

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

Please send us records (2 copies of vinyl, if possible–one for MRR and one for reviewer), or CD-only release. See records section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

RAY LUJAN

AVENGERS-Zero Hour-LP	SMALLTOWN-Years, Months-45
LES BATON ROUGE-My Body-CD	THE FUSE-Fisherman's Wife-LP
THE PURRS-CD / MAXEEN-C	V/A-It's Not Just Boys' Fun-CD
MOTO-Spiral Slouch-EP	THE WINKS-Spoil Me-EP
THE CHECKERS-You Don't Wanna Know-45	SOUTHPAW-Trajectories-CD

BOBBY MANIC / WILL RISK

BOBBY MANIC	WILL RISK
HIGH SCHOOL ROCKERS/DEAD CITY REBELS-split EP	COLBOM-Famous Last Words-EP
THE CHECKERS-You Don't Wanna Know-45	QUEERWÜLF-EP / HORRIBLE ODDS-12"
THE QUICK-In Tune With Our Times-EP	BITCHIN'/ONION FLAVORED RINGS-split EP
MOTO-EP / PUT-ON'S-Get Your Kicks-7"	WHAT THE KIDS WANT-live/ABI YO YOS-live
RAMONES-More Unreleased Tracks-LP	FULL MOON PARTISANS-live

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

TEAR IT UP-LP / THE FUSE-LP & live	CAREER SUICIDE-LP / TOTAL FURY-live
FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-LP & EP	LIFE SET STRUGGLE-Trapped-EP
NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-LP	LEATHERFACE-LP / THE FALL-LP
THE PULSES-10" / VECTORS-Still III-LP	BITCHIN'/ONION FLAVORED RINGS-split EP
SMALLTOWN-45 / BURY THE LIVING-LP	Pirate Cat Radio 87.9 FM in S.F.

DONNA POOLE

THE AVERSIONS-LP	MR. CALIFORNIA & THE STATE POLICE-EP
THE HORRIBLE ODDS-Underground-12"	WESTERN ADDICTION-EP
TEAR IT UP-Taking You Down With Me-12"	S.H.A.T.-Air Plane Ride-EP
SEXY-Por Vida-LP	THE CHECKERS-You Don't Wanna Know-45
THE VECTORS-Still III-LP	QUEERWÜLF-EP

BRUCE ROEHRS

ULTIMO ASALTO-En Pie De Guerra-EP	NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-LP
RETALIATOR-EP / TEAR IT UP -12"	THE VECTORS-Still III-LP
TEXAS TERRI / ANTISEEN-split-45	SISTER MARY ROTTEN CROTCH-LP
INEPSY-R'n'R Babylon-LP	WOLFBRIGADE-In Darkness-LP
CAREER SUICIDE-LP	WARCRY-EP / HAMMERLOCK-live

MIKE THORN

NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-LP	BORN/DEAD vs. CONSUME-split LP
COLBOM-EP / CONTRAST ATTITUDE-EP	BURY THE LIVING-LP / QUEERWÜLF-EP
WARCRY-EP / THE VECTORS-LP	CAREER SUICIDE-LP / SMALLTOWN-45
LOS DOLARES / SIN APOYO-split EP	DESASTRE-EP / PROWL 10"
NO REST-CD / THE HORRIBLE ODDS-12"	TURUN TAUTI/YHTEIS KUNNAN YSTAVAT-LP

RYAN WELLS

MR. CALIFORNIA & THE STATE POLICE-EPs	MOTO-Spiral Slouch-EP
THE FALL-Formerly Country on the Click-LP	AVENGERS-Zero Hour-LP
YOUNG ONES-CD	THE FUSE-Fisherman's Wife-LP
THE EMMAS-I Hate People-EP	FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-LP
THE QUICK-In Tune With Our Times-EP	SMIRK-live

ZINE TOP TEN

BEARING EDGE #2	LIFE DURING WARTIME #6
EQUALIZING DISTORT Issue 3 / #9	MONOBRUTAL #2
HAZARDOUS WASTE Oct. 2003	PICK YOUR POISON #4
INKLING #6	XEROGRAPHY DEBT #12
JOSH HOLE #1	MINE #2

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#148/Sept '95. Soda Jerks, Toe Rag, Thorazine, Sacred Straight, Wizo, Opposition Party, Moody Jackson, Adversives, Opcion Crucial, Rebel, Rebel, Teen Idols, Walking Ruins.

#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#151/Dec '95. Lowdowns, My White Bread Mom, Queen B's, Electric Frankenstein, Turtlehead, Serpico, Trick Babys, In/Humanity, Stains, Varukers, Pist, Terrible Virtue.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#154/Mar '96. Motards, Subincision, Stisism, Donnas, Stallions, Count Backwards.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnåre, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#159/Aug '96. Smugglers, Tone Deaf Pig-Dogs, Too Many Records, Man Afraid, Blind Side, Vox Populi, Fun People, Fat, Drunk & Stupid, BrandNewUnit, Death Wish Kids.

#160/Sept '96. Automatics, Boycot, Toast, Morning Shakes, Mormons, John Q. Public, Sex Offenders, Ballgagger, Business, Apocalypse Babys, Good Riddance.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#163/Dec '96. Last Sons of Krypton, Prostitutes, Wig Hat, Boys, Let It Rock, Enemy Soil, Vulcaneers, Half Empty, Zeros, Deadcats, Teen Idles.

#166/Mar '97. Walking Abortions, Hickey, '77 Spreads, Sanity Assassins, Cards In Spokes, Joey Tampon & The Toxic Shocks, Adjective Noun, Suicide King, Lenguas Armadas, Trauma, De Crew.

#168/May '97. Cretin 66, Fishsticks, Distemper, Enewetak, UK Subs, Luxo Champ, Jake Sayless, "Pioneers of Punk."

#169/June '97. Hand Skin, Cluster Bomb Unit, Jihad, Purgen, Speed Queens, Remission, Halflings, The Old Man, Deface.

#170/July '97. Bristle, Mine, Tedio Boys, The 4 Cockroaches, Absconded, Meanwhile. Broken, (Young) Pioneers, Hoodrat.

#171/Aug '97. Violent Society, Strychnine, Idiots, Knuckle Heads, Race Traitor, Patrick Grindstaff, Misanthropists.

#172/Sept '97. Withdrawals, Judgement, No Motiv, Oppressed Logic, Truents, Left For Dead, Yellowskin, Weird Lovemakers, Smash Your Face, Flatus, Straight Faced, Klaxon, X-It.

#174/Nov '97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity, Education theme issue.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#178/Mar '98. Economics issue. Forgotten Rebels, Dirtys, Josh Collins, American Steel, Letterbombs, Gyogun Rend's, Go-Devils, Room 41, Tone Deaf Pig Dogs, Garage Rats.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Ümlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, Third Party, No Class, Skabs.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres..

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#213/Feb '01. Fun People, Onward to Mayhem, Ugly Pop, Midnight Evils, Atrocious Madness, Bread & Water, Josh Peach, Zodiac Killers.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#217/June '01. Joey Ramone R.I.P., Tear It Up, Skitsystem, The Pattern, CrimethInc., Esperanza, The Chicago Blackout, Photographer: Ace

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#219/Aug '01. "Fix It!" cycling article, Crucial Unit, Lost Sounds, Lombardies, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 1, Casualties, Resinators, *P.U.N.K.*, Slaughter & the Dogs, Anti-Flag, Dontcares, S'Bitch.

#220/Sep '01. Latin American Issue. Aubuso Sonoro, Anti-Todo, Fuerza X, Apatia No, Manganzoids, Demencia, Sick Terror, Tocatta y Bulla, NTN, Argies, Reconcile, Anti-Korpus, Ruido De Odio, Los Pepiniyos, Rebelion Disidente, Brazil Scum , Kim Bae Photo Essay.

#221/Oct '01. Tales from the G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 2, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene report, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11," Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four,
All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Anti-war guest columns. Anti-war scene reports. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#237/Feb '03. Top Ten Records of 2002, "Music as a Weapon: Artists in Wartime," Dirt Bike Annie, Let It Burn, Stoçkyard Stoics, King Khan & Shrines, 625 Records, Feast Or Famine, Rudimentary Peni, Coachwhips, Self Defense.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola and San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine, Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

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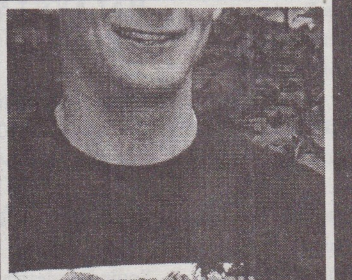

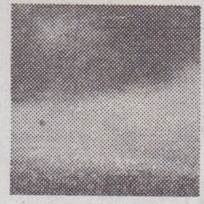

TARANTULA HAWK
Gatefold LP $10 U.S. / $15 World (Airmail)
cd available from NEUROT RECORDINGS

Tarantula Hawk's second self titled album is now available on vinyl packaged in a hefty gatefold. "Instrumental super heavy ritual music, bass-heavy majestic murk with grinding prog rock keyboards and intense, energizing drumming, spacey stretches of ominous gloom..." -AQ

SKEW WHIFF
"Taedium Vitae" CD
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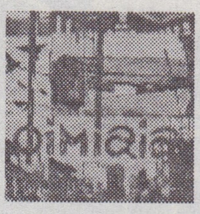
Skew Whiff hail from Liege, Belgium and play punked out crust with slaying metal guitar leads. Kinda like their previous bands (Hiatus / Medication Time) mixed with a bit of TRUST, Bleeding Rectum, Scatha, and even some later era Subhumans stuff. This CD contains 14 tracks total packaged with a 16 page booklet. Tofu ist Dead!!



DIMLAIA
CD out in September
Gatefold LP out by the end of the year....

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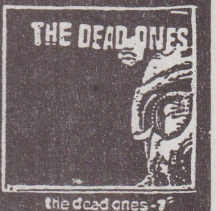
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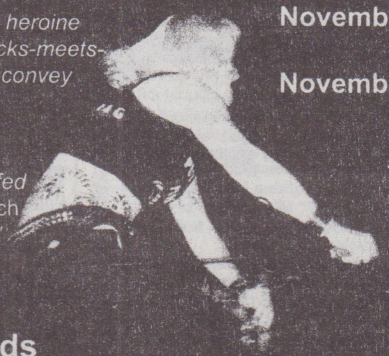

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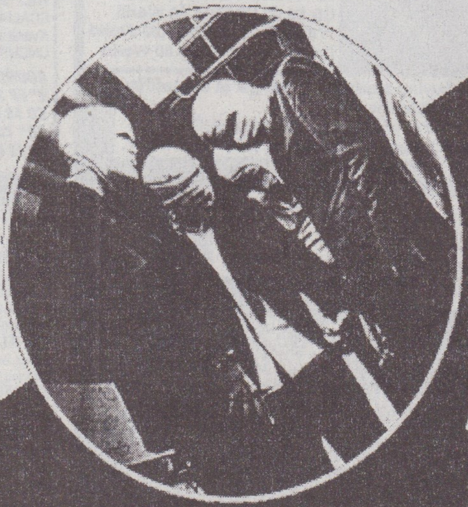

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LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760, or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed.

MRR—
Radical Sharp Shot 2003 East Coast Apocalypse Tour—D.S.B. would like to thank—No Fucker, From Ashes Rise, Stuart (G.O.T.A.) & Christy, the Pink Rabbit (Providence RI), abc no rio, 1st Unit church, *Maximumrocknroll*, Toshio (Manglove/Base) and all the radical punx in USA!!!!
D.S.B.

MRR—
I propose a fund is started so Felix Havoc can tour Europe every year and write back with his hilarious observations from the back of a transit van/gig space of a squat. Maybe we could get our European government to fund him to come over? Hopefully next time he'll get lucky and find a hot punkette fresh from the gym that finds dog-faced know-it-all midgets attractive and write about how much better our sex is too (and entirely government funded!) I'd write a more in-depth critique, but the European government is paying me to listen to Mob 47 endlessly, not to write to unlucky foreign tourists.
Pip pip, Bruise Springsteen
fischarge@lycos.com
P.S. he's absolutely correct, all those Polacks and Spaniards aren't to be trusted, it's in their *eyes*!

Dear*MRR*/Vince Horner—
I just read the review of the Lords of Lightspeed 12" in the Jan 2004 issue of *MRR*, which you guys kindly sent us. Now, we read this review and thought it a bit odd to compare Lords of Lightspeed to Man Is the Bastard (this from Joshua Plague? what?) but wrote it off as odd descriptive abilities.

But when I read the description of LOL as "heavy" and "slow and muddy" "tons of static...buried in sludge" there was obviously something bizarrely wrong going on. Then, when I saw the letter from our friend Lon about the Straight Edge Kegger review (done by the same jackass!) I realized what probably happened. The guy (this Vince Horner) reviewed not only SEK's record at the wrong speed (33 rpm instead of 45), but our release as well (beside that, he said both were Man Is the Bastard-esque, which is insane!) The music is completely different as he described it, being more noisy black metal with screechy vocals, similar to Behead the Prophet NLSL, but when slowed down, it sure does sound like his description.

But Damn! Well I can see that if one is to play many bands at 33 instead of 45, they may indeed be convinced that everyone sending them records, nay, all the world is insistent on playing like Man Is the Bastard. Conclusion: We don't care if it was a well-informed review that hated it, but this guy either played the record at the wrong speed, or has musical knowledge limited to Man is the Bastard, which is equally as ridiculous. I'm guessing since it was unmarked, and a 12", the dude just put in on and didn't fuck around with the speed. *Lame!*

Please print some part of this letter so people at least know that it happened. I'm sure you won't bother to re-review, but it would be cool so people could get a better idea what they sound like. And try to reign in this Vince Horner character; he's on a rampage!
Meg and Matt, Banal Existence Records
berecords@aol.com
Plus new address:
2746 C Street
San Diego, CA 92102

Hi Arwen—
I just wanted to thank you for the great review that you wrote of my label's first release. That was definitely a fun project to put together. I also wanted to give you the background on the Florida/Nepal connection.

This record is a true testament to the power of the internet. About two years ago I was googling for the most obscure punk I could find on the web by doing searches like "Kazakhstan punk" or "Latvia punk." I did a "Nepal punk" and found them. I have a massive punk MP3 collection so I emailed them wanting to know if I could trade MP3s for any music they had from Nepal. They emailed me back and we just started this really cool computer relationship.

They sent me their releases when they came out and I sent them about 14 discs filled with raw MP3s which they then took and burned to audio CD and started a little distro in Kathmandu giving away burned CDs of, for them, really hard to find punk. They sent me their latest release, the "Guerrilla" cassette, wanting to know if I could help distribute it. I talked to some friends like Bob Suren, of Sound Idea, and decided against it, as cassettes are very hard to distro. So instead I asked if they would like a 7" and they jumped on it. A couple of months later and it was done. Having lived in Miami/Ft Lauderdale and being involved in the scene there for over 20 years I've been friends with Chuck Loose for a long time so he was the obvious choice to do the artwork. So there you have it—the Nepal/Florida connection.

Once again, thanks for the great review.
Justin / justin@cudney.org

Dearest *MRR*—
Hey there, Matt from Miami here. I put together the Miami scene report in issue #248 and I'm just writing to apologize for a particularly awful comparison. Scream When You Burn sounds nothing like Saetia or Cowboys Became Folk Heroes. I hadn't seen SWYB live in a very long time, remembered they were screamy-ish hardcore, and just took a stab in the dark. SWYB is awesome but using Saetia and CBFH as reference points wouldn't be a good idea.
—Matt Underfoot

Dear *MRR*—
Enough Ranae Bryant columns already! Her writing is so corny and cheesy it seems like a seventh grade Hot Topic punk wrote it! Gimme a break! Talking about leaving a $25 Strike Anywhere sweatshirt behind at a show and being pissed is straight fucking lame. What punk buys $25 sweatshirts to begin with (Strike Anywhere aside)? Sorry, don't mean to be petty but her shit

is lame and washed up and totally irrelevant to hardcore.

On a lighter note, Tear It Up broke up and I say fuck yes! About time. I don't own anything these jocks put out but I was getting tired of all the fact that people thought they were good. Fuck 'em! Don't know 'em, saw them once (they sucked for the most part) but glad they're gone!

Okay, enough lame ranting, I don't wanna sound stupid (too late)! Keep up the good work!
Brian / Albuquerque

MRR and Ramsey Kanaan—

Part of what punk rock is, is being able to live side by side with other punks (and regular people) and accept different lifestyles and beliefs. Being a Christian and being into punk rock since the 80s, I've shared a pit or two with people that don't share my beliefs, I don't mind this. And because of a bunch of bad seeds out there that give Christians a bad name, Christians are probably one of the most hated groups of people out there and I'm used to it. I don't shove my beliefs down people's throats and I've always respected another person's religion no matter what it is. We all live here together.

But I've noticed in this PC day of age, where no one would be caught dead in this magazine slandering against sexual preference, gender, race or most religions, it's perfectly "cool" and "hip" and "punk-as-fuck-bro" to write the words "fuck God, and fuck the bands that follow in his wake" as our boy Ramsey Kanaan did in his review of some CD in the December issue.

Ramsey, it's fine that you don't believe in God, I really am not concerned with where people put their beliefs, be it in science, Buddha, Islam, Christianity, etc, etc., because that's what punk is all about, individuality. I get mad at Christians who think everything is wrong and evil. I've been into punk rock forever because of its stance for freedom of expression and it's the only music out there that cares about people regardless of differences...women's rights, gay rights, everything. But it's also about respecting those rights, we shouldn't support bands that call women "whores" or "bitches," we shouldn't support racist or homophobic people. If a punk band dedicated to Islam comes out and sings songs about their lifestyle, including religion, I would respect them and would never think of saying "Fuck Allah" and state for all the world to know that "I don't believe in the Islamic faith" so that I can get hi-fives from my punk rock brethren. No, I would show respect and if I liked the band, I would support the band. The same reason I supported bands like Bad Religion back in the day. Bad Religion is all about science and no God, and they were a great band and I supported them despite our different beliefs. Ya, there are Christians out there that want to burn homosexuals on a stake and yank away women's rights. There're greedy, evil thieves and liars out there that go under the guise of a Christian (George W. Bush, Jr. for example), but it's the same in every lifestyle. There are weeds in every patch of grass out there. Ya, screw Bush, he's evil. Screw all those Jerry Falwell, Rush Limbaugh idiots that give my religion a bad name, but just remember that there are real Christians out there...even in the punk world although we're a minority.

Just because I'm slamming to the Zodiac Killers and Anti-Flag doesn't mean I'm an atheist. Saying "Fuck God" in your review is the same as saying, "fuck Jews," "fuck Muslims," "fuck anything that doesn't abide by my personal lifestyle because although I say I believe that everyone has a right to live by their own beliefs, it's not really true because I want everyone to be just like me." That's what you're saying. I'm not a Jew, and I would never say, "Fuck Jews." Go back and read your review. When you start it off with "God doesn't exist..." That's fine, that tells me what your beliefs are and I respect that and you're keeping it cool there while still being true to who you are Ramsey, just don't disrespect other people's beliefs by going on with "fuck God" because that makes you no better than a racist, a homophobe, or a frat-boy jock who doesn't care about anything but himself. Take care.
Tony Sunby
intybinty@aol.com

Dear Tony—

Is saying "fuck god" the same as being sexist or saying "fuck Jews"? Fuck no! For one thing, "god" is a concept that some people believe in and some people don't—everyone pretty much agrees that women and Jews are actual real people who exist, right? There's a difference between criticizing/being against an idea vs. the same attitude towards a person/group of people. But, the review does include "the bands that follow in his [god's] wake" for criticism, so is that ok or is that discrimination? I think that there's a big difference between the dominant (Christian based, here in America) culture discriminating against Muslims or gay people, and an underdog culture (say, the punks) being opposed to all trappings of the oppressive society surrounding them and its beliefs, especially when those beliefs are frequently used against us. To say that the people who use Christianity to justify discrimination against queers and women aren't the "real" Christians is just not true! Ok, so maybe you follow the teachings of Christ and ignore the rest of the bible and 2000 years of Christian culture and tradition, but that doesn't mean that that stuff isn't "real" Christianity just cause you don't want it to be. Christian culture oppresses women, Jews, queers, other religions, freedom of expression, and other things that we, as punks, are for (in my humble opinion of what punk is). Thus, punk = anti-Christian. If you don't consider yourself to be this kind of Christian, then this isn't addressed towards you, so, no problem. So, don't take it personally. — Anandi

Hello—

I've been reading *MRR* for about 17 years and have never felt the motivation to write a letter to you until now (Ah!) I just want to comment on the cover of #248. I laughed out loud! Good work M. Bukowski! I especially liked the skateboard aimed at the head of Tony Blair—hilarious.
That's all.
Cheers, Mark Ism

MRR—

Mike Taylor—yeah, so lots of hardcore out now sucks (like most of any genre) but if you'd rather see some artsy band play for eight hours, maybe you should see if you can get a column in *Punk Planet*, 'cause *MRR* is for punks! Plus, as usual, what are you talking about?? Talk about self-indulgent masturbation—your column sucks!

Arwen—thanks for telling the *Razorcake* dudes to fuck off. If you ask me, if anything you went way too easy on em! I can't believe people still think it's ok to spout that kind of bullshit! Us ladies need to keep on letting people know that they can't get away with that in the scene (and dudes! Please! Props to the letter writer from a few issues ago who brought it up.)

All—great stuff, thanks! Especially I like Erika's column, good addition!

Kay / San Francisco
PS—I like the news section, but I would rather see less mainstream type stuff. What's the point?! Anyone can find that—I'd rather see stuff I can't read on Yahoo, you know? And it's fun to read the Brits slagging bush, sure, but I'd rather read what the punks in Venezuela think of Hugo Chavez or some follow up on last year's Argentina news or about the hunger striking punks in prison in Greece—in short, something I can't find elsewhere, or that no one but *MRR* would care about (like punk news)! That's all! Thanks!

MRR—

Quite a bit has changed since *MRR* put out #133 [the major label issue], but a lot has stayed the same. Major labels are still picking up "punk" bands and pushing them on corporate radio and MTV. But, some major-indies have had some major impact. Touch and Go is still around and made a huge coup with !!! and the Yeah Yeah Yeahs. Vagrant is still indie, but they are 49% owned by Interscope. Rancid has a distribution deal with Warner Bros. but you don't see it on they album. The same with Hot Hot Heat. The Warped Tour will be doing its 10th anniversary tour this summer. How has that affected punk tours in the summer? Or has the bands that got discovered on the Warped Tour its true legacy (Eminem, Limp Biskit, blink-182)?

I think it is time to reexamine the issues brought up in #133 and see if anything has changed. I know that the list above is woefully incomplete, but I hope that it can be used as a jumping off point for your contributors to start working. However, I would like to suggest that you use this opportunity to map out a solution. How can we avoid irrelevancy in the face of corporatization of punk? What can we do as a scene to make sure our beliefs and love of music is not diluted by major labels, Hot Topic and Avril Lavigne.

In short, how can we maintain our DIY spirit and be as revolutionary as we were 10, 15, 20 years ago?

Thanks, Robert

Hey *MRR* —

In the last issue we had a demo review done on us. A very good one I might add. And we've been getting tons of letters in the mail asking for it. But the problem is that we don't make the demo anymore, cuz we have a single out and shit. So we have nothing but our singles to give out to the people, and we're giving them out for less, because they only send like two or three bucks.

So, I was wondering if in the next issue, you could say somewhere that Savage Lucy doesn't give out their demo anymore, and to please stop sending letters, but they can keep sending money. Money is good. And if they want the new single, they can buy it on our merchandise page. Or something like that. It would be real useful to us.

We love *MRR*, and we were so happy to read that review. It made us feel warm and fuzzy inside.

-AH-NAH C. Lobotomy
Savage Lucy
www.savagelucy.com
Ellensburg, WA, USA

Dear *MRR*/Arwen—

I just read your column in issue #247 of *Maximum RocknRoll* and just wanted to say how thought provoking and well written I found it. What is sadder is that ever word of it is probably true. Sexual assault is an incredibly serious violation of a person's basic rights and personal boundaries, and even though I don't know the people in question, it sounds like that was very much the case. What is sadder is my agreement with you over the fact that when I heard this, I pretty much initially thought, "Is that all?" as well. The expectation to have to assert ourselves and spell out what we are willing/not willing to do to any guy who might happen to be interested in us is an unacceptably common occurrence. Yet numerous women (myself included) continue to accept it.

It makes me really angry to see all the dualisms and hypocrisies that exist in the way male and female sexuality is viewed. Someone just using offensive or derogatory language towards women is just having a laugh, while women who enjoy sex are slags, easy, a bit of a goer, or one of many numerous insults that can be thrown at her, and just as cruelly, those that don't want sex are frigid. There are tons or hypocrisies out there. I know I've always been aware of them and thought they were wrong. I am interested in and into feminism, equality, anarchism, and that sort of thing – what I hadn't given very much thought to is your comment about the number of times you have experienced similar things, and I guess I felt compelled to express my feelings of solidarity and empathy with you and the all the other women out there (which is probably just about every one of us) who has experienced unwanted invasion of our personal spaces and boundaries by men.

I myself can think of numerous cases of wandering hands and mouths and having constantly having to redirect them, as in literally picking them up and placing them back, sometimes back onto the guy, sometimes repeatedly, to the extent that I've felt the need to get up and walk away or to create a barrier or diversion. At the times they were happening, I guess they did piss me off, and they were probably reasons and contributing factors as to why these encounters/relations never continued. On a few occasions (and I guess I did want to), curiosity and all that would get the better of me, and I would "give in" to the hands, but I do remember thinking it was a kind of giving in after this relentless battle of the hands. My body the battleground. I guess I feel my personality is strong enough that I have always ultimately felt in control of situations like these, but at the same time, I am troubled by my ready expectation that this is way things will be. It definitely should not be the case, and it makes me angry to think of the instances where other women might have been coerced into doing things they did not feel totally comfortable with.

Another problem is that it has turned into this kind of battle between the sexes and between men who you would not think could behave in such ways. Most of the guys I have known I would consider to be cool guys and into punk, or at least to share similar outlooks on life as me. They certainly weren't idiots, but intelligent people who if asked, would assert that sexism was a bad thing, and I'm sure they would truly believe that it is. I think the point is this sort of behavior doesn't even register to most men as something that is not acceptable. Having sex and having a desire to have it is something that we have been told is the one thing that men are after. The acceptance of overt sexual behavior in males has been fucking conditioned into us, and it's so ingrained and steeped in our culture and society, it's gonna take a fuck of a lot to get it out. Of course it's totally possible and necessary. When it occurs in the punk scene—something which is supposed to offer some kind of alternative—it is dismaying, although hardly surprising.

How we go about tackling this problem, though, is something that I think is a really important issue to be raised and sorted out. Anyway, I guess I just wanted to offer thanks and stuff for talking about these things in your column. I myself would never classify the situations I've been in as anything more than a bit irritating, but I guess that's because I've always had the will to say no when I haven't felt comfortable. I guess guys who are prepared to wait/respect you and for you to respect them (or even want to wait for themselves 'cos it does happen) as well are pretty rare to find. Although on the plus side—they do exist.

But yeah, the majority of guys think this sort of stuff is a given, so they wouldn't even question it or the roots it comes from in society. The quote you have of Sean Carswell as saying "you can't call kissing a breast or feeling up a woman who chooses to sleep in your bed sexual harassment" is totally unacceptable. How we can make people realize this is another matter, though. I guess it will come from building mutual respect/trust, but coming a hell of a lot from the part of the guys (which sucks, 'cos it's like they have all the power to change their attitudes) and in promoting the fact that just 'cos women don't necessarily feel sexually constrained any-

more, they also shouldn't feel pressured to do anything they don't want to. Again, I had the determination to wait until I felt 100% comfortable to do things, so I was a kinda late starter, but whatever, "there absolutely no shame in it," just in the fact that I can see the ways some people did place pressure on me and whatever. Sex now has become a given in a relationship, even if it's in terms of one-night stands. If these are mutually wanted, then cool, but if not, then that's not OK.

Anyway, I could go on for ages about how right I think you are (I already have by the looks of it). I also hope you don't get any negative responses about this from anybody. People really need to think about these issues really carefully.

Take care
Natalie
www.londonradicalcheerleaders.co.uk
www.theblackstarcollective.co.uk

Dear Arwen and co—

Hello, it's me, controversial figure Rich Mackin. I will try to keep this from becoming the recurring back and forth I have seemed to be locked into with so many people—you pick apart something I said, and then I pick apart what you said about it. However, I think your column in the December issue does and doesn't do a few things I would like to address.

One of the central issues to the whole situation I got myself into is the seeming need to polarize everything. Am I a rapist or did I do nothing wrong? Actually, you yourself hit the nail on the head—you read about what I have done with women I knew and thought to yourself "What a creep." Consider this for a moment. A creep is a bad person. A creep does bad things. But creep is not another word for rapist. The problem is, that while I am being rightfully called on bad things that I have done and am sorry for, the terms being used for these actions are not accurate. I suppose a metaphor would be that it's wrong to punch someone; one punch cannot be called a beat down.

A specific point I wanted to call to your attention is that you mentioned that you tried to consider all angles, even trying to "walk in my shoes." One thing you did not do is talk to me about this. That's your prerogative, there is nothing that obligates you to talk to me, but consider that if you really wanted to know how I felt, maybe emailing me (richmackin@earthlink.net—printed in everything I do, including the noted Razorcake article) might have been a start. Again, you don't need to know how I feel, but if you wanted to, wouldn't contacting me have been a good first step?

I think this is indicative of a lot of zinester/punk/lefty activist mentality—we are all so used to activism= protest=complaining=manifestos and slogans. I piss someone off, so they do a zine about me, I write a column about the zine, someone else does a flyer about my column.... What happened to discussions? For all the hullaballoo about community and dialogue, there isn't much of it. By all means, many of my actions were morally wrong, but what would be more constructive? Talking to me about it or talking about me about it? For all the people passing flyers to each other about what I should do (usually more like what I should not do) there aren't that many who grasp any of the myriad ways they can tell me what they seem to spend so much time thinking about. All of the energy I see put into this doesn't seem intent on helping a soul, merely making an example out of me.

I saw some graffiti once that said "Revolution without a plan is just rebellion," and a wiser man than I once said "the problem with the left is that we don't think we deserve to run things, so we just complain about how things are." So for all of the criticism of what I did wrong, what the women who did the zine did wrong, what the critics of the zine did wrong, I am hearing little to no input on what could have been done that would be better. I mean, for all of the work being done to make people dislike/fear me and not read material affiliated with me, what does that do to stop future boundary violations, sexism, assault, or rape? Oddly, most of the people who seem most intent on making me suffer and feel bad are also outspoken about how the prison system doesn't work. If punishment doesn't work for the system, why does it work for the "radical community?" I have been told to be that there need to be public accountability for my actions, but when I seek to engage this topic on a public level, the people who are most outspoken about me needing to be accountable are usually the first ones to criticize me for doing just that.

Buddhist monk and peace activist Thict Nhat Hanh has said, "If you want the tree to grow, it won't help to water the leaves. You have to water the roots." We live in a sexist, misogynist society, and making an example of one guy who does wrong doesn't do any more to prevent further sexism and oppression than telling a junkie that heroin is bad for them. Neither does talking only to people in your own circle who mostly agree with you anyway. Nor does starting every conversation with an adversarial tone. Sure, it's a lot easier to ruin one person's reputation than alter problems at the roots of social ills, but since when is the ease of a cause related to its validity?

You use a good device with the idea of "What Really Happened," however, even that might not be the crux of the issue. When two people are alone, no other people will truly know what really happened, but that doesn't mean what happened is inherently one story or the other. Much of sex is based on tone, mood, emotions, and feelings. Someone can quote words said, but not the tone or manner of touch. A phrase like "this isn't a good idea" can be said with a tone such as "I am deadly serious, this is wrong and bad, thus it isn't a good idea" or, as can happen with certain personal relations, "This isn't necessarily a good idea, but it probably be a lot of fun." This does not absolve the other person of confirming that the idea, good or bad, is desired by all parties, but it does allow the possibility for misinterpretation not being the same as premeditated violence. Again, far be it for me to say that I didn't err seriously in several situations, but a judgment error is not the same as rape, misogyny, and sadism.

Sometimes two different versions of a story are both accurate—the most immediate example being someone offending someone else and replying "I was just joking." Indeed, they were just joking—they meant no harm. That doesn't mean that no harm was caused. It doesn't mean the offended person stops being offended and it doesn't mean that apologies are in order and some thinking about the nature of joking shouldn't be done. People who say "that is so gay" usually don't say it in order to come across as homophobic, but that doesn't make it ok. But it not being ok isn't the same as it being hateful. Accusing ignorance of being hate tends to make the issue more about semantics than something to resolve.

If I accidentally run over you in my car, I am as responsible for your injury as much as I would be if I did it on purpose, but that still does not mean that I chose to run you over. You can call me a dangerous and bad driver, but not a cruel pedestrian hater. Someone who defends me by saying I didn't mean to shouldn't be accused of being against responsible driving. One can be against the death penalty without being in favor of the crimes those on death row have committed. One can think it's barbaric to cut the hand off of a thief without being for thievery. Yet, if someone speaks on my behalf because they don't think my actions toward certain women warranted the sort of reaction that came of it, they are attacked for not being supportive—not just in this situation, but of sur-

vivors of sexual assault in general.

Likewise, while I can complain about how I was called out in a really piss poor way, what I/we in "the community" really need to do is find out what would be the better way for future reference. Does escalating a he said/she said argument help, or would it be better to have an intervention between a smaller group of people that is then more publicly announced? The question isn't, "what can I learn from this" but "what can others learn from this" which is why, by the time you read this, I will have been to a few workshops such as one presented by Men Can Stop Rape (www.mencanstoprape.org) and have digested a great amount of literature on the matter so that when I talk about this in the future, it will be an informed opinion, not an angry reaction. I wonder how many of my critics are willing to do the same. And I wonder which is more likely to affect positive change.

Finally, it is my understanding that you, Arwen, were not interested in talking to Sean and Todd about the opinions of Patricia Geary, long outspoken feminist writer, Felizon's work with abused women, or the feminist slant of the rather anarchist influenced community center Flor Y Canto, because, as I understand it, they have nothing to do with punk. This seems to be a recurring thought that I worry about—I hear so much about the need to deal with sexual assault in specific communities (cliques? scenes?) and the response seems often to kick the alleged offender out of the scene so that they are someone else's problem. Is activism about solving problems or just not having to look at them? Is rape only bad when it happens to someone who dresses like you or likes the same bands? Sometimes, it worries me that this might be the case to many of the people who are very quick to judge and punish the accused, but do little more to help, heal, evolve, or educate.

So, having read this, some people will like me more, and some people will like me less. Everyone is entitled to their opinions. But are strong opinions enough? For all of the columns, zines and flyers that have surfaced to drag my name in the mud is the world any safer? For all of the impending *Razorcake* vs. *MRR* column gossip that is being created, is any of this educating anyone?

Rich Mackin
PO Box 14642
Portland, OR 97293
richmackin@earthlink.net

P.S. To end on a constructive note- some of the more useful material I have come across include *You Just Don't Understand*, by Deborah Tannen, PhD- a discussion on communication itself, especially on communication styles between men and women; and *Men's Work, How to Stop the Violence That Tears Our Lives Apart* and other books by Paul Kivel, of the Oakland Men's Project. I have so far seen both books used in an anti- male privilege radical group, an anti-oppression men's group, and a Zen Center. A good online reference about sexual assault specifically is www.thesafetynet.org. And a very simple thing men who care can do is simply this—every now and then ask a woman you know if you ever come across as sexist, then listen to what she says.

Dear Mr. Mackin,

Thank you for your interest in MRR *products! We appreciate your business.*

No, but seriously. You aren't writing to a faceless, pitch-churning corporation this time; it seems, at least, like you're writing to me. It would have been nice, if that were true, if you would have addressed my arguments throughout. Instead, you wandered between my column and what you perceive to be the general tendencies of the radical community (and everybody else you feel persecuted by), regardless of whether my letter was typical of those communities or whether I even belong to them. It does make for a confusing read.

All the metaphors are confusing as well. I'm not sure they are really working out for you. I'm confused; are your admitted sexual trespasses toward woman like a couple of punches (not a couple of beatdowns), or are they like running someone over with your car accidentally (not on purpose)? These are two very different things: is it that you hurt people knowingly but just not that badly, or is it that you hurt people because you lost control of the car? Were you (just a little) violent, or just terribly careless? Or is it society's fault, pushing you inexorably toward sexual violence like a junkie toward heroin?

Then there's this part: "Finally, it is my understanding that you, Arwen, were not interested in talking to Sean and Todd about the opinions of Patricia Geary, long outspoken feminist writer, Felizon's work with abused women, or the feminist slant of the rather anarchist influenced community center Flor Y Canto, because, as I understand it, they have nothing to do with punk." I'd like to look at this more closely for a minute. I think it would be useful for people reading this to learn, as I now have, just how eager you are to distort the truth in order to shift blame onto someone else.

So here's what really happened. A while after my MRR *column was published, Sean contacted me and we spoke on the phone (Todd never has contacted me). The quote above refers to when, in this conversation, Sean brought up the part of my column where I challenged the* Razorcake *editors to approach issues of sexual assault with more genuine concern. He wanted to know why I didn't bother asking him personally about the good work he does in the community before saying such a thing. What I told him was this: I didn't ask him because that isn't the point. The point of my column was not to attack him as a person but to challenge, publicly, the ideas he presented publicly in his column. I am sure he has done good things in his life, but in this instance—the instance I am concerned with—I think he behaved badly. My objection was more practical than moral, or at least, it's a practical morality—I believe that as big zine editors we have a certain degree of power to influence the atmosphere of communication in the communities we affect—mostly, you know, the punk scene.*

I interrupted Sean when he went on to tell me about the work and experiences of Felizon, his wife and publishing colleague. As far as I know, she has never written about the subject to me or in the zine. I told him that I would not accept her life experiences as his own, nor would I hear her opinion through him. A marriage does not a single mind make. If she wanted to call me herself, I would argue with her in person. This, Rich, is an act of solidarity with other women, not a dismissal.

Throughout the course of this debacle, Sean and now you, use these "expert (women) witnesses" to boost your credibility. Patricia Geary's column in Razorcake *#17 is a perfectly valid, but off-topic observation, about professor-student power dynamics. To frame this as me somehow not respecting other women's voices is extremely manipulative to anyone reading, and very misleading. On purpose.*

Even more appalling is the insinuation that I think "rape is only bad when it happens to someone who dresses like you or likes the same bands." That's so ridiculous it barely warrants an answer. Clearly, concerned people have to address problems as they occur, when they occur, in their own communities. In my column I wrote about ways that accusations of sexual assault had been dealt with in the punk scene in the past, because they are at issue to us now, in searching for better solutions.

I thought that conversation was sort of between me and Sean, but I guess it's not, so I feel OK about sharing the gist of it with our readers. Basically, Sean thinks that women like the three who accused you of assault are making mountains out of molehills. You know, saying they got beat down when they only got punched. He also asked me the same thing that you ask me here: what am I doing to help women? What have I done?

I knew that was coming. It's a very typical, transparent response, another attempt to dodge responsibility, this time by deflecting it back on me, a critic. I'll tell you what I told Sean on the phone: it's none of your business. You have no grounds to challenge me—I did-

n't assault anybody. But I will tell you this—like other women, I deal with these issues constantly, in my society, community, relationships, and in the memories I carry in my own body.

It's a challenge to write a letter like this. I know that the more we quibble back and forth, the more likely it is that people's eyes will glaze over, that they will "pick a side" just to be able to stop listening to us bicker. When you have to refer to a stack of old zines just to know what's going on, you know you're stretching that precious thread of attention.

I agree that the tendency to polarize is a peril we should avoid, but man, you aren't making it easy. I'm not sure if you actually even read my column. I called you a creep, not a rapist. On purpose. A rapist is always a creep, but a creep isn't always a rapist. I didn't choose my words here carelessly, and later on in the column, I wrote about how language is important to how we think about sexual violence.

You are digging yourself deeper and deeper. With every defensive analogy, every sneaky little attack on me or other women, you make it clearer where your heart lies: self-preservation above all else. You're obviously much more concerned about your own battered name than you are about violence toward women. I am not fooled for a second by your dubious efforts toward self-improvement; even those seem geared toward excusing your behavior (books that explain why women can't make their needs understood to men? Whatever.) You had the option of accepting this situation with some humility, and genuinely expressing regret for damage that you did, but you decided, instead, to go down whining.

One last question. You know in the graphic for your last column, where the woman and the man are kissing and she is holding a butcher knife to his back? Just curious—what is he doing with the fork?
—Arwen

Hey—
My name is Logan King, from Athens, GA. I wanna say I enjoy your column every month, and the magazine as a whole. Been picking it up for longer than I can remember. I don't know who the guy is that reviewed my old band's 7" (Divorce), but if ya can, tell him thanx for a very nice review. The main reason I'm writing is about your column this month on Rich Mackin. I wrote him a while back to get some of his zines cuz I like his style and the shit's funny. He was very kind and sent me more than I paid him for. I, as well as a friend, have been asked by Rich to set up an Athens show for his spoken word tour. I was going to do it, no question, until I read your column. I'm confused, mainly because I know no one involved in this issue, and the one paragraph you wrote concerning what he supposedly did is very confusing.

I'm not a male apologist, but in some of the cases, without more information (which as far as I go, is just going to be hearsay anyway) I can't really place fault. For instance, the lady that said they both got "sexually charged up?" Well then, did she say no? Or did she consent at the time and regret it later? And the other one who says she "now" feels their relationship was coercive? To put it bluntly, I hate rapists. That's that. A majority of my female friends/lovers have had abuse or rape in their past. It's horrible, no other way to put it. I also hated a man for a year and was planning to hurt him badly, until the girl accusing him of molesting her while she was drunk (who was my closest female friend for seven years) told me that she made it up. I'm not trying to say that's the case here, it's just when it's such a serious accusation as rape, we can't assume anything. I talked with some of my Athens folk who say they've heard he's a bit of a "dude," hanging around the solitary ladies at whatever gathering, and upon getting dissed, moves along to whoever else he can find. Sleazy, yes, but hardly a crime.

I guess what I'm asking you is if you can let me know any more details on this issue, I know it's not my business per se, but given that I was gonna do a show for this guy, I'd like to know if I should cancel it, or have him come and address the issue. Both sides deserve a voice when an issue's been made public and so little is actually known. I've been lucky in the past with people who I book shows for being genuinely good folks, and I don't wanna change that.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. Hope all is well with you, and thanks for any help you can give me.
Peace, Logan

Logan,

OK, you hate rapists. That's the easy part. Everybody "hates rapists," just like they "hate nazis." I think the element of a "total evil" is easier to wrap your head around than the more nuanced, but just as legitimate wrongs that you are more likely to have to confront. Or not to confront, as the case may be.

You say that you can't place fault based on hearsay—a quandary I also discussed in my column. But in Mackin's case, we know what he did. It's right out there—he admits it. But you want more details, like what it means that the woman was "sexually charged" (my paraphrase of Mackin's words, by the way, not a quote from her). Her being turned on (if in fact she was) does not mean she wanted to have sex. She decided she didn't want to have sex. She said she didn't want to. There's your answer. And why is it questionable that the other woman called her relationship with Mackin coercive after it was over? Often we can't see the patterns of our abuse until we are distanced from them—this isn't an anomaly.

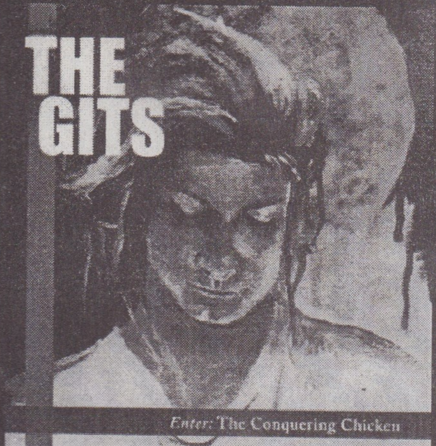
Why are these the details you pick out and examine, as if the others don't speak for themselves? Why are women's claims of assault always held to a higher burden of proof than other accusations? For example, when your friend told you later she "made it up," why didn't you question her honesty then? Why did you accept that at face value, without considering that maybe the pressure of proving herself and defending herself against an unsupportive community got to be too much, and she wanted out?

As far as wanting to know more details, I don't have them. Why do you need them? Why does the scene being more vivid make it more real? When I wrote about men accepting rape only when it is committed with a particular kind of violence they can understand, this is what I meant. The violence of a gun or a knife can be responded to with more male violence—as you say, you can go kick the guy's ass. But that isn't about supporting women—it's about asserting male power. It's an easy answer that isn't even an answer. If you really want to hold women's interests at heart, you have to accept that violation is a subjective thing. You don't get to decide for your women friends what hurt most and why.

It's true that being a sleazebag isn't a crime, though I'm learning that Mackin does indeed have a reputation for that perfectly legal activity. But chronic creepiness is no gold star either. A man's pattern of being disrespectful and pushy to women is not unrelated to the likelihood of his being violent toward them.

It's up to you whether you do a show for Mackin—I'm not going to tell you what to do. But it sounds to me like you're looking for an excuse to get out of being involved in this issue. As a man, you can choose for things be easy and non-confrontational, rather than taking the more challenging path of using your privilege to support those with less power in the scene or in society. I really don't know what you should do, but I will say this much: with so many women in your life who have been raped or otherwise abused, it seems like supporting them should be a priority. I would be careful, at least, that in your mission to deal with only "genuinely good folks," you don't make them into that when they're not.

Sometimes in the punk scene there's too high a value placed on "working things out in person." What that often means in reality is that people with some power, for the sake of their own peace of mind, come to uneasy compromises—betraying the interests of people with less power—while they smooth over disagreements that ought to stay sharp and loud.
—Arwen



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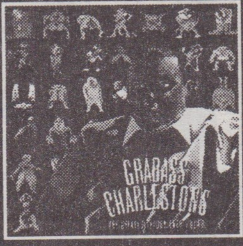

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COLUMNS

I knew the FTAA Ministerial meetings were coming to a city near me, so I went to an anti-FTAA organizational event three months prior. While there, another mom and I chatted it up, and one of the things we talked about was the need for organized childcare during the anti-FTAA events.

We knew from our personal experience that since becoming mothers, there were several goings-on that we had not been able to get involved with or participate in due to the lack of child care available to us. And we knew from talking to several others that they felt like we did—that because of the demands of caring for kids, they felt forced out of the loop of being active in ways beyond actively parenting.

We were all too familiar with the reality that child care at large-scale events is not organized the way the medic, convergence space, media, and legal help spaces are. And we were all too familiar with attending meetings that felt disrupted because our kids were there, and with not feeling like our kids were in a safe space with us demonstrating in the streets because overzealous cops were there.

Since I already had experience organizing cooperative child care and knew about the efforts of the ABC (Anti-Authoritarian Babysitting Club—whose collective voice was heard in this column in the May 2003 issue, #240), I committed to getting on the ball with making it happen in Miami during the November 17-21 anti-FTAA events. Just driving home from that initial organizational event, my mind was snapped into organizer mode, and as soon as I got home, I jumped on getting in touch with the ABC to find out if they were planning on bringing their already organized selves for the showdown like they had at five other large-scale events throughout 2002 and early 2003.

I soon found out from one of the ABC collective members that the project was on indefinite hold for various reasons. Though disappointed, I wasn't discouraged that I could not facilitate a similar childcare model, especially since one of the ABC collective members promised to be a resource for my efforts.

I attended the next big organizational meeting and announced my intentions of organizing childcare. I let all in attendance know that every one of them could help by spreading the word that child care would be available and how seriously important just spreading the word would be, because parents automatically assume that there will be no child care and therefore do not even plan on attending such events. I also let the paid organizers know that they could help in finding a childcare space.

After that, I set to work to get the word out myself by asking several key informational and organizational websites to post that child care was being organized and that interested persons should contact me to pre-register their kid(s) and/or to volunteer to do a shift at the child care space. Word did get out and kids were getting signed up, though slowly at first. I expected that, though, and not until the week before the events did the majority of parents wanting care for their kid(s) get in touch with me.

One of the aforementioned paid organizers did come through with a potential childcare space, a nursery room at a local church. Jackpot! This was exactly what I was hoping for—an already set up room for kids so that I wouldn't have to create one from scratch. The only problem was that it was a 15-minute drive from where the actions would be. I ran the potential problem by all the parents who had been in touch with me up to that point and all of them said pretty much the same thing, that we'd take what we could get and deal with it. I set to work to create the liability waiver that the church wanted all the parents and volunteers to sign, along with a medical release form and a general information/registration form.

Things were looking pretty tight and I was feeling excited instead of overwhelmed. There were volunteers coming out of the woodwork, I had all the forms faxed to my contact at the church and was just awaiting final confirmation on the times we could have the nursery room, and my ABC resource person was coming through with all the support and answers to my logistical questions as I needed them. The last things to do were to think out, type up, and put together the required training for all non-parent volunteers, and to get an actual schedule put together so that all the volunteers could sign up for shifts.

I was calling my church contact every day to find out the exact times we could have the nursery room, and after a week, I started getting nervous. My contact was out of town, back in town but sick and would call me back, and never called back, so I'd call again only to find out that he still hadn't confirmed the times himself with his Board of Directors. I started making desperate calls to other organizers for leads about any other local churches who would open their doors, since the project was by now well-publicized by the frenzied local media hype. When I finally got my answer from my church contact, I guess the hype about the potentially violent demonstrations had informed his final decision—that it sounded like too much trouble to have at the church and that he'd clean out his garage and put down a piece of carpet for us instead.

It was a mere three days before the child care effort was to begin that he gave me this news and at first, probably out of shock, I actually considered taking him up on his garage. But after a couple hours and several phone calls to the others involved in organizing the child care, I called him back to say thanks but no thanks, and was left scrambling to pull this effort off in spite of having no space secured after all.

I'll spare you the details of the over-anxious and uber-stressed hours I spent on the phone desperately trying to find another space, because the next thing that happened was also unforeseen and halted me in my tracks. I got word from two dif-

ferent parties, each of which had been planning on bringing a group of four or five kids for childcare, that they had decided to not bring the kids after all. I had to stop to put it all into perspective.

Was I going to continue busting my ass to get a space for a now relatively small number of kids that I could easily accommodate at my own house, located 25 minutes away from the actions? Would 10 more minutes between the space and the actions be an issue for the parents and volunteers? If people had been deciding at the last minute to not bring their kids, then I could for sure count on others deciding at the last minute to bring their kids, and then would there be enough space at my house?

Attempting to process all this in a relatively short amount of time and to try to figure out all the right answers to the questions that were too loaded with unknown variables got me feeling like a failure. All this hard work had crumbled too easily. Still burning with desire to make something, anything work out, I called or emailed each parent, volunteer, and co-organizer to explain the latest developments, as calmly as I could. After talking to several of them, I stopped busting my ass and we turned to cooperative childcare. After talking to one more, I took her idea to march with her kid in the big legal, permitted march and ran with it. I contacted everyone again to tell them that we should all march together as the Mom & Baby Bloc. Since I was no longer going to be on duty at the child care space for three straight days, I was not just going to sit at home feeling like I had been dumped.

What wound up transpiring was equally, if not more inspiring and empowering than if the organized child care space had come through as planned.

Some of us marched together with our kids on the last leg of the Root Cause march (a three-day, 34-mile march) all the way to the barricade that surrounded the hotel where the FTAA Ministerial meetings were being held, and all the while flanked on both sides by bike cops, Robo-cops, riot cops, cops on horses, cops in cars, and from above, cops in helicopters.

We had a Mom and Baby Bloc meeting at the convergence space the next day. Even more of us marched together as the Mom and Baby Bloc the next day in the big legal, permitted (AFL-CIO sponsored) march—including spontaneous chants and signs like "FTAA needs a spanking," "FTAA is full of poopy," and "Something stinks and it's not my diaper."

The day after that, we took kids to the really free, free market where they got to take whacks at a papier-mâché dollar-sign piñata, eat yummy free food from Food Not Bombs, learn how to fold origami cranes, paint, make music, run, play, and listen to stories by a guy with his old-timey paper spindle "TV."

And when parents wanted to be involved in more than those events and needed care for their kid(s), it was done cooperatively either at my house or one of their hotel rooms.

The downside was that there did end up being several folks who wanted or needed care for their kid(s) that wound up not participating with us because the child care space fell through. That really bothered me because in spite of my efforts, I couldn't make it happen. Once again, there were parents who could not get involved who wanted to or who could not participate in ways they wanted to.

What came out of the energy of spontaneity due to the space being canceled on us was, like I said before, exciting, inspirational and empowering. It was all that because when things fell through, we were able to group together collectively so quickly, many of us having never even met before, to strategically get ourselves off the sidelines with our kids. But like I said before, too, there is a great need for childcare to be a given, just like the convergence, medic, food, housing, media, and legal spaces have become. If parents had the big issue of childcare removed from the forefront of our brains, then we could actually think about something else and participate in more ways!

So the work I cut out for myself didn't have the closure I thought it would have. I thought I'd close up the childcare space after the week's last event and be moving on to see what work I could do next. Not so. This job isn't done until the Mom & Baby Bloc get it through organizers' heads that child care should be something we can expected. After all, we're fighting for a better world here. Shouldn't part of the fight reflect what that better world would look like?

As always, punkparents get in touch. Email: yardwideyarns@hotmail.com

PS. For the low down on what went down in Miami, check out www.stopftaa.org, www.indymedia.org, and there are also some decent stories posted on www.alternet.org. Search around for other independent news sites, too—the truth is out there.

In the past few weeks, I've been more concerned with the record I'm putting out rather than the records that other people are doing. Call me selfish, but I can't lie. The biggest revelation I've had while going through this whole process is that I've finally got a decent look at the work it takes to producing the things I love so much. Don't get me wrong. Putting out a record ain't exactly rocket science. It's not a walk in the park either. My experience, thus far, is that this is a pretty stressful and really expensive process. Maybe I'm just doing it wrong (trust me, I probably am). It almost makes me wonder how it's even possible to succeed at such a thing (for the kind of stuff we like, it probably isn't…which is admirable). Regardless, this column may be lacking the quantity of stuff that most of my columns include, but the quality is certainly there. This month will officially conclude the 2003 releases, so dig through the past 12 columns to find your Top 10 lists. I know I will…but I'm a bigger dork than you are!

With the release of their third S/T album, THE SPITS once again prove that they are simultaneously the most brilliant and retarded band around today. Not much has changed since their last records (thankfully!) There are still only 9 tunes. It's still barely cracks the 15-minute mark. And, most importantly, this rocks so fucking hard I can't stand it! Songs like "Witch Hunt" and "Don't Shoot" have embedded themselves in my brain and show no signs of leaving anytime soon. I can't stop drooling! I can't think of one reason why you shouldn't buy this immediately. The Lady And The Robot (the "title" I've given the record) is out now on Dirtnap Records. Don't say I didn't warn you!

Punk's favorite high school freshmen, THE DISKORDS, finally see their album hit shelves! Blame It On The Kids, released on Vinyl Warning, more than follows through on the greatness of their previous singles and live show. Whether the

band members are 15 or 55, these are some great fucking tunes! They got that real tough-guy HEARTBREAKERS and DEAD BOYS sound down perfectly! Reports that "Savage Love" (lyric sample: "She walks with switchblade sex on her hips") is their ode to HILARY DUFF remain unconfirmed. They're friends with METAL MIKE...do the math. As a companion to the full length, Dirtnap has released a 7"EP entitled Pink Palace. Let's just say these boys are growing up fast!

M.O.T.O. has struck again! In spite of my claim that their recent album, Kill M.O.T.O., was merely 82% percent great, this band has grown on me like a fungus. I don't think my initial review emphasized the fantastic hooks this band specializes in. Look past the hulking mystique and protruding Cro-Magnon brow and you'll see pop genius incarnate. It's true, you know. Late-bloomers (and, let's face it, we are) should start their M.O.T.O. worship with the Spiral Slouch 7"EP, a new single recently released on Shit Sandwich Records. You get four brilliant, gut-busting tunes, "Wind It Out" being my favorite. For your collector fetish, I'd like to suggest the marble blue mailorder-only edition of this single, of which there are a scant 100 copies. Chop off the head of the non-believer!

Although the next two records share no label or personnel connection, it seems fitting to group them (at least to me). Although it came out a few months ago, How We Lost The War, the debut 7"EP by GIANT HAYSTACKS, has found a semi-permanent home on my turntable as of late. I'm sure you could refer to a MRR back issue to find a more in-depth review of the record, but let's just say that art punks and political punks would be equally impressed by this band. A fitting east coast counterpart to Oakland's Giant Haystacks is New York's ARMEDALITE RIFLES, who's Won't Fight 7"EP features the same sort of UK art-punk influence and political tone, although maybe a little more personal and anthem-prone. I found both of these records incredibly refreshing after spending the past few weeks in a noisy haze. Hopefully they have the same effect on you.

The latest release on the great Kapow Records is the debut 45 by KILLER DREAMER, "Survival Guns" b/w "Pterodactyl2". Kapow's always-great packaging is worthy of discussion with each release, and this single is no exception. The sleeve immediately recalls the insanely detailed art found on the old RUDIMENTARY PENI records. The lyric sheet features a typically disturbing Rudi-P looking ghoul...riding a skateboard and drinking a beer! Yes, speed up the dark drive of Death Church and add some thrashy screaming and you get "Survival Guns." The flip is slightly poppier and faster, but the mood of insanity and damage remains. Surprisingly good stuff here, but for the bravest readers only.

Another Kapow band, THE LIPSTICK PICKUPS, have released their debut S/T LP on Radio Beat Records. This ultra-limited (250 copies!) LP features some really fun girl-fronted poppy '77 punk. It's a shame so few will get the chance to hear it! On the power-pop side of things, Radio Beat has a great 45 by THE CHECKERS, "You Don't Wanna Know" b/w "The Fanatic." Trouble is there are only 100 copies of this one! Fear not though, both tunes can be found on The Checkers' Make A Move CD, their debut album on Teenacide Records. Radio Beat also released a decent CD compilation featuring THE FUSE!, THE SHAKES, STEVE BAISE, and many other recognizable names. All of these releases, along with Let's Get Rid Of LA, prove that 2003 was a really exciting year down in Southern California.

Smartguy Records has rescued OldTime-FutureShock, the previously impossible-to-find 2000 LP by DAN MELCHIOR'S BROKE REVUE. Fans of his recent Troubleman and In The Red releases will no doubt jump all over this rediscovered gem. The SKIP JAMES rework is the highlight for me!

Yakisakana Records has returned with two new releases! The first is the third single from one-man Scat Ragger, SKIP JENSEN & HIS SHAKIN' FEET. This 7"EP, entitled Evil Weirdos, is just as insane as the previous Yaki and Solid Sex singles. A bigger story than this single (literally) is that Yakisakana has put out their first non-7" release! France's MAGNETIX have belted out the Flash 10"EP! I missed their LP from a few years ago and I'm kicking myself. This is some truly excellent fuzzy two-piece garage. Don't be fooled by the new-wave cover art, this is as garagey as it gets. A few artful touches keep things interesting, not to mention highly rockin'. Apparently this is the first in a series of 10" releases for Yakisakana. Can't wait to see what they do next!

Another decent punk record out of France is Artrats, the new album from NEUROTIC SWINGERS. This release is a quantum leap from their other records, as the levels of catchiness have been quadrupled here. I welcome the change, as their other releases left me quite cold. This band would be very much at home on Dirtnap Records, as they are poppy and punky in all the right amounts.

There are a few other new comps worthy of note. There's an exclusive FM KNIVES tune ("The Secret Of My Success") on the new 1+2 Records CD comp, Hodge Podge & Barrage Vol. 4. That remains the main point of interest for me, but THE REDS (also exclusive and what I'm assuming to be the last of their material), SWEET J.A.P., TYRADES and a bunch of new Japanese bands check in with appearances. Gearhead got Eric from NEW BOMB TURKS to compile another comp (remember Half-Assed, Will Travel?). Greaseball Melodrama includes some of my very favorite bands (BASEBALL FURIES, SCAT RAG BOOSTERS, HUNCHES, MYSTERY GIRLS, CUTS), so this is well-worth checking out.

Venturing back a little, I'm sure some of you are more than familiar with the late, great SGT. 6 ASSAULT, a band that made some really killer records some years back. Well, Rapid Pulse has raided the vaults and released "Goin' Down On You" b/w "The Bitch." What's funny is that this might be the best single they have (although "Bullshit Job," or whatever it was, ruled). Put this in your next Underground Medicine order!

Creeping back a little more, I'm sure many folks noticed that one of my favorite bands ever, THE OBLIVIANS, played a reunion show in Memphis on Halloween. Anyway, in celebration of this, Eric Oblivian has released First Recordings, a one-sided LP that features (duh) the first ever recordings from these Memphis creeps. Originally released as split demo tape with IMPALA, these sessions will no longer be the thing you read about on Grunnen Rocks and get upset over never hearing them. Naturally, it's limited to 600 copies, so act really fucking fast.

Now we're gonna go waaaaaaaay back. Sadly, I've got no singles to dish in the "Old Shit" section this month, but I've got plenty of LPs. As I'm sure you'll see, it's been a really good month for LP reissues. The logical place to start is with three recent reissues from the kings, Get Back Records. First off is a beautiful 180-gram reissue of Living In Darkness by AGENT ORANGE, which I hadn't heard in so long that I forgot how awesome it is. Next up is THE NUNS' S/T debut, which I never

owned...until now! Lastly, there's Zero Hour, which captures a decent '79 live AVENGERS show. Sadly, the energy level seemed to be turned down that night (it was one of their final shows), so serves mainly as point of historical interest rather than a great fucking record. I'm a big Avengers fan, so I couldn't pass it up. I'm probably not alone here...

4 Men With Beards has dropped a couple of *mandatory* purchases (if you don't have the originals, that is) this month. I mean, honestly, you can't beat reissuing THE BUZZCOCKS' Singles Going Steady and THE SAINTS' (I'm) Stranded on 180-gram vinyl. It just doesn't get any better than that. Ever.

Since I caught wind of it, I've been looking forward to Artifix's KAOS reissue, Komplete Kaos. Well, it's now out and all that I had hoped for: includes tons of unreleased material, photos, liners, a radio interview and video footage of them you can watch on your computer! Not to shabby for a band with only one 7"EP!

I'm gonna cut myself off there. I should probably call the pressing plant *again* to yell at them for making my life a living *hell*. Since you fuckers obviously can't take a fucking hint...SEND STUFF TO: Mitch Cardwell, PO Box 23882, Oakland, CA 94623. I'll be waiting patiently. Fuck...I've *been* waiting patiently!

When I was a kid, standing around the post office waiting for my mom to buy stamps, I entertained myself by flipping through the "wanted" notices clipped to the bulletin board. I was impressed by the fact that most of the people who'd done bad things didn't look all that evil in their mug shots. Mostly the felons looked tired. And poor. You could tell from their frayed collars.

Mixed in with the accused murderers, kidnappers, and mail fraud conspirators (this *was* the post office, after all) were local kids wanted for dodging the draft. Their profiles didn't look anything like those of men wanted for tri-state killing sprees. The sections dedicated to "prior convictions" were blank and the government didn't have fingerprints for them. Draft evaders' photos came from their high school yearbooks where everyone turned a little to the right, grinning with optimism and framed by shaggy early 70s haircuts. Nevertheless, the message was clear. As far as the government was concerned, evading service in Vietnam was as bad as boosting a bank.

Whenever the feds needed more cannon fodder, they interrupted primetime sit-coms to broadcast a draft lottery. Two guys wearing American flag lapel pins would turn a metal tumbler and pluck out slips of paper bearing birthdays from 18 years earlier. "If you were born on April 4, 1951, you have 30 days to report to your local Selective Service bureau."

Shirley Jackson's short story "The Lottery" wasn't nearly as creepy.

"How long has this war been going on?" I asked my mom while Uncle Walt recited body counts along with the closing value of the Dow Jones Industrial Average. Born in 1963, I must have been about 8.

"Pretty much since you were born," she replied. Then she corrected herself. "Well, really even before that."

"Will it end before I turn 18?"

"I don't know. Probably not. I hope so."

They stopped the draft when I was 10; we lost the war two years later. I never had to resolve the terrible dilemma that drove those kids on the wanted posters to flee to Canada. Were they pacifists or were they wimps? Everyone knew that Vietnam wasn't winnable. Was it wrong to refuse to die for nothing, or was it good sense? Was defending the corrupt South Vietnamese regime of President Nguyen Van Thieu "fighting for your country"? Even if a war was both winnable and moral—World War II, say—was forcing a human being to risk death and dismemberment a form of slavery?

War is the riskiest and gravest endeavor that can be undertaken by a nation-state. Defensive combat, the struggle for self-preservation, is the only kind of war a just and prudent nation may wage. Unless an overwhelming majority of a country's citizens agree that a war is necessary—a *real* war like Iraq or Vietnam, not a lark like Grenada or Panama—it cannot be won. And a country united by the consensus that it must fight doesn't need a draft. Citizens will line up to volunteer.

In early November, the Pentagon website DefendAmerica.mil put out a call for applicants willing to serve on Selective Service System draft boards. "Serve Your Community and the Nation—Become a Selective Service System Local Board Member," the ad read. "If a military draft becomes necessary, approximately 2,000 local and appeal boards throughout America would decide which young men who submit a claim receive deferments, postponements or exemptions from military service, based on federal guidelines." Noting that the SSS hopes to fill its 8,000 draft board slots by spring 2005, many journalists are wondering aloud whether the Bush Administration plans to reinstate forced conscription of 18-to-26-year-olds after the election, just on time for invasions of Iran, Syria and/or North Korea.

Reports of a big uptick in the draft agency's budget from '03 to '04 abound, yet the feds claim that ramping up Selective Service is part of "the routine cycle of things." "There are no secret discussions," says SSS spokesman Pat Schuback. "We aren't doing any planning that we don't do on a routine basis." Yet they refuse to issue a categorical denial. A February Surprise, perhaps?

Our armed forces are stretched dangerously thin. 60,000 of the 130,000 troops stationed in Iraq come from the National Guard or reserves. 90,000 more are serving in Kuwait, Afghanistan, South Korea, Kosovo and Macedonia. Demoralized by low pay and long tours of duty under harsh conditions—why won't Bush invade someplace with nice weather and hot babes?—49 percent of soldiers told *Stars and Stripes* newspaper that they won't re-enlist. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and top brass say they prefer volunteer professionals to surly conscripts, but in the end they may not have a choice.

This much is certain: If Bush resumes his neocolonial land-grab after "re"election, he'll have to bring back the draft. And a new generation of young men, ordered to disrupt their lives to feed the vanity and bank accounts of a cabal of gangsters, will have to ponder whether to flee or fight.

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MY NEW BOOK: I've done a sequel to my ATTITUDE cartoon anthology, this time featuring 21 cool, new, and different cartoonists. My interviews with the cartoonists, which suffered a

little from formattic difficulties in the first book, are much tighter and focused this time around. I still love the first book, and would recommend it to anyone interested in altie cartooning, but you do learn as you go in this business. A new anthology of brilliant cartoonists whose work appears in alternative weekly newspapers, ATTITUDE 2: THE NEW SUBVERSIVE SOCIAL COMMENTARY CARTOONISTS presents incisive interviews, personal photos, ephemera, and of course lots of cartoons. Comics fans will doubtless be familiar and enjoy this book's insight into the work of well-known artists like Aaron McGruder, who draws the daily comic strip "Boondocks," Max Cannon ("Red Meat," which you'll find in *The Onion*), Shannon Wheeler ("Too Much Coffee Man"), Marian Henley ("Maxine!"), David Rees ("Get Your War On," which appears in *Rolling Stone*) and Alison Bechdel ("Dykes to Watch Out For"). As with the first ATTITUDE, the real treat of ATTITUDE 2 is its spotlighting of cartoonists whose work is so good that it deserves much more attention. Other cartoonists featured include Jennifer Berman ("Berman"), Barry Deutsch ("Ampersand"), Emily S. Flake ("Lulu Eightball"), Justin Jones (Soda-Pong"), Keith Knight ("The K Chronicles), Tim Kreider ("The Pain—When Will It End?"), Kevin Moore ("In Contempt Comics"), Stephen Notley ("Bob the Angry Flower"), Eric Orner ("The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green"), Greg Peters ("Suspect Device"), Mikhaela B. Reid ("The Boiling Point"), Neil Swaab ("Rehabilitating Mr. Wiggles"), Brian Sendelbach ("Smell of Steve, Inc."), Tak Toyoshima ("Secret Asian Man") and Jason Yungbluth ("Deep Fried"). Order from any bookstore, Amazon.com or e-mail me at chet@rall.com and I'll tell you how to order a signed copy from me.

Fascist attack! Fuck that!

On November 20 a group of fascist skinheads attacked a Boston area punk house (in neighboring Somerville), sending Keith, the drummer for STATE CONTROL, to the hospital with a fractured skull.

As I write this two weeks later, the State Control house and Boston punk shows are under watch, and a few punks have gone into hiding out of fear of personal attacks. Members of the Keystone State Skins (KSS), a Philadelphia-based white power group, are suspected as responsible for the attack. Currently anarchists, anti-fascists, punks, and skins are on the alert, and are keeping an eye out for the gang's possible return.

I'm writing this column to dispel rumors and to get the word out to the punks and skins about what happened in Boston. Neo-nazi goons may come to your town, and you and your friends want to be prepared. This attack is another wake up call that current conditions in the US have fueled the growth of fascist crews. The persecution of immigrants, blind nationalism, right wing Christianity, and warmongering are a few factors that come to mind.

Before this attack, I didn't see any Nazi punks or skins around town, and had little idea how organized and large some of the neo-fascist skinhead groups are today. Now, I know. You can even see photos of some of these crews posing on the web. Check out the main page of the Key Stone State Skins at www.keystonestateskinheads.com. They look like regular skinheads, except they wear black ski masks and carry assault rifles. They are scary and dangerous behind their masks. Just like their older cousins, the KKK.

On November 20, late on a Wednesday night, a group of nazi skinheads was seen walking through Allston. About an hour later, a van was seen circling around the neighborhood of the State Control house.

State Control is a Boston punk band that has been playing shows for about two years now. They like to drink and play catchy fast street punk songs and say I'm too old and political. You can see a handsome photo of them in the Boston scene report by Pat FNS in the December *MRR*. It seems insane that a fascist skinhead crew, or anyone, would come after them. They are nice guys, really.

After an hour or so, the suspicious van returned to the State Control house. About fifteen skinheads jumped out and attacked the house, moving in from all sides like a trained SWAT team. The skinheads, bigger and older than the punks at the scene, hurt several punks fighting to defend themselves and the house. During the fight, Keith of State Control ran out of the house with a sledgehammer. One of the skinheads grabbed the sledgehammer away from him and viciously smashed in Keith's head. Keith suffered a cracked skull and ribs, as well as a collapsed lung. He was taken to the hospital by ambulance, and his condition is now stable.

At least one skinhead got a bottle smashed in his face, showing that size isn't everything.

Although the Keystone State Skinheads, on their website, denied having anything to do with the confrontation, people identified KSS member Steve Smith at the scene. Steve Smith was one of three KSS boneheads who attacked a black man in Scranton, PA. You can see a photo of Steve at One People's Party, www.onepeoplesproject.com, a group that does research and organizing against fascists.

Many think KSS was looking for revenge. A few weeks earlier, a group of punks beat up a skinhead making racist comments at an EXPLOITED show in Providence, only about an hour from Boston. Although friends of State Control were supposedly involved with that fight, Keith, the most severely hurt during the home invasion, had nothing to do with it.

It is now suspected the KSS crew worked with boneheads from New England and had the help of people in the Boston area.

Along these lines, someone gave the fascist skinheads State Control's address. As THE SPECIALS warned, "If you have a racist friend…now is the time, now is the time for that friendship to end." If someone is a fence-walker and hangs out with racists or neo-nazis, even if they say they're *personally* not racist, don't fucking trust them. At the very least, they are idiots. At the worst, they could give information (knowingly or not) to the wrong people.

So, what to do now?

Learn, share, organize and act! Here in Boston, the fascist attack has strengthened the obvious need for punks and skins to become part of ant-fascist and anti-racist networks and organizing.

But don't wait until something this fucked up happens to one of your friends, or in your town. Start connecting with other folks now—become aware of the issues, confront fascism and racism in its everyday forms–before racist thugs walk your streets.

Learning self-defense techniques also isn't a bad idea. Be

prepared for the worst.

Let me end this with a few groups you should definitely find out about. I must admit that until two weeks ago, I had very little knowledge of some of these groups. And damn, I am so grateful for their past work and organizing efforts that we can now become a part of. We here in Boston need it. So do you.

Antifascist and Anti-Racist Resources:

One Peoples Project, www.onepeoplesproject.com, is a very good site for the latest news on the anti-fascist front. It is the only place on the web where I found the whole story about what happened at the State Control house posted. My article will be a month old by the time you read it. Check out OPP's site for the most up-to-date info. The site also has a "Rogue's Gallery" with photos and profiles of active Nazis and racists. OPP recently posted, "If you have any more information on this recent incident, particularly about who was involved, please contact us at antifa@onepeoplesproject.com, or by phone (212) 479-7362."

Interestingly, if you incorrectly type **www.onepeoplesproject.ORG**, you are taken to the unhappy home of **The National Alliance.** If you think organizing against fascists and white power is a waste of time, I suggest you check out this site. Hierarchy and Inequality are the Natural Order in their reality, and pure Aryans have an obligation to rule the world. Fucked up shit.

Anti-Racist Action (ARA) is a group many skinheads and punks may be familiar with. ARA got its start confronting fascists and white power assholes in Minneapolis and St. Paul in 1987 and has grown to include chapters across the US and even internationally. Check out their website, **www.aranet.org ,** for a chapter near you. You can subscribe to the ARA-NEWS ezine by sending an email to lists@tao.ca with the words "subscribe aranews" in the body of the email message.

All ARA chapters are autonomous, but agree on the ARA four Points Of Unity. I think it is worth repeating these points here, especially since not everyone has easy access to the web.

1) **We go where they go:** Whenever fascists are organizing or active in public, we're there. We don't believe in ignoring them or staying away from them. Never let the nazis have the street!

2) **We don't rely on the cops or courts to do our work for us:** This doesn't mean we never go to court. But we must rely on ourselves to protect ourselves and stop the fascists.

3) **Non-Sectarian defense of other Anti-Fascists:** In ARA, we have lots of different groups and individuals. We don't agree about everything and we have a right to differ openly. But in this movement an attack on one is an attack on us all. We stand behind each other.

4) **We support abortion rights and reproductive freedom.** ARA intends to do the hard work necessary to build a broad, strong movement against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, discrimination against the disabled, the oldest, the youngest and the most oppressed people. We want a classless society. **WE INTEND TO WIN!**

Hell ya.

Red & Anarchist Skinheads (RASH) is a worldwide, street-based movement of revolutionary left-wing skinheads. Known as "redskins," their goal is to fight the class war on the streets. RASH was officially founded in New York City in 1993 and "fights the right-wing forces that are fundamentally against the working class and our struggle, as well as the racists (including both the fascists and the conservatives, of all colors) who seek to 'divide and conquer' the workers and keep us from uniting against the real enemy." **East Coast chapter and worldwide links** can be found at **http://redskins.fightcapitalism.net.** Their analysis ties in the fact that, "As skinheads, we have a special responsibility to fight the influence of white supremacism in our subculture and promote anti-fascism and working-class pride."

Right on!

RASH also has an entire section on their website dedicated to anti-fascist and anti-racist punk, skinhead, Rasta, and rude boy tunes with many MP3s for the listening. They are ready to dance on the heads of any fascists who get in the way of workers' revolution.

Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC) began officially in Boston in 2000 and "opposes all forms of oppression and exploitation, and struggle for a classless, stateless, non-hierarchical society." Check out **www.nefac.net** for in-depth articles about anarchism, anti-fascism and revolutionary struggle. There is an excellent article posted by Rory McGowan, *Claim No Easy Victories: Anarchist Analysis Of ARA.* While you are on the web, check out **Anti-Fascism.org www.antifa.net/,** a useful source of information about fascism and how to fight it.

Cheers

Fuck the holidays and smash the state. Cheers to everyone at the NAKED AGGRESSION shows at ABC No Rio in NYC and at All Asia in Cambridge. Good times! Good luck to all of us in the struggle for a better world. In solidarity and anti-fascist to the core, Erika Ransom

Rudy Can't Fail

Yo, seriously, absolutely nothing has happened to me in the entire month since I last wrote a column. I mean, it snowed a bunch one day, and I listened to THE CLASH some. I ate some pizza. I got my name on the top scorers' list on the golf video game by my house. That's it though, man. I've got nothing for you, man. I'm going to list some shit I got in the mail, then I'm out of here dude. I don't know what to tell you. Sorry, I guess. But seriously, though, you have to ask yourself something. Did you really want to read my column this month? How much of this shit can you take? You know? I'm still bummed. I'm still bitter and cynical. Jeez, man. Hail and Kill, though. Hail and Kill. Fuckin' a. Here we go.

Wait, here's something.

So this weekend marks my quarterly freak-out call to Arwen. "How many months can people really endure hearing about how bummed I am?" That was my lead off, this time. I moved on to point out that the column at least had a story arc when I was making progress with depression and anxiety and shit. And then when I was getting worse, sure that's a bum out, but still maybe an interesting story, right?

But now, come on, what the fuck? I'm in some half-assed state of being bummed, but not really being motivated enough to care. It's the same shit every month. People want resolution, Arwen!

Plus, getting drunk and making out with girls is kind of getting creepy, right? It was romantic at first, but now it's just gross. Besides, now I seem to just be getting drunk and going home.

Anyway, I asked her. "Are you sure you still want me writing?"

I mean, I know maybe I'm a little bit more neurotic about this kind of shit than other people, but come on. How am I not supposed to ask this question every once in a while? I got asked to do this column years ago. How am I supposed to know if those dudes over there aren't all freaking out being, "Dude, we need to ask Wells to leave, but I don't want to be the one to do it, he's weird, he might freak."

Jesus, I don't know, man. This is brutal. In any event, Arwen gave me the green light. I'm still welcome here, so here I am.

Destroy all Motherfuckers

It's been a good month or so for mail. I got a bunch of good demos, zines, and even a fucking book. I'm going to run down some of the notable shit.

First up is a demo I got from UZI SUICIDE. It's pretty rad. Andrew and I listened to it in my car for a while a week or so back. It's been making rotation ever since. This is their Fall 2003 tour demo. It's fast and thrashy, and really pretty funny too. They've got song titles like, "Brutal To The Max" and "My Very Own Spazz Song."

I finally got around to reading the lyrics today. I'm not sure if they're being ironic or double ironic, but "I'll make your face strawberry strudel, if you say gay to describe un-brutal," is a pretty fucking rad lyric either way. I mean, it'd be hard for me to get up in arms about strawberry strudel anyway.

You can write these guys at UZI SUICIDE, PO Box 675, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-0675 or check them on the web at www.ratzy-outh.com.

I also got an advance copy of the new THUMBS UP EP. I knew the band already from their stuff on Rodent Popsicle, but was totally pumped to get this new EP. Honestly, after I figured out it was the songs of a record that wasn't out yet I kind of felt a little cool or whatever. You know, like a cool a guy. It was weird. Anyways, THUMBS UP reminds me of this band that came from Long Island called CONTRA. It fucking rules the school, dude, for sure. Check these dudes out at www.thumb-suphardcore.com.

In the zine (but come on, really this is a book) department we have the absolutely mighty Lauren Agresti's zine, *Beyond Gallery Walls and Dead White Men*. Lauren and her pal Kendra assembled a 100-page examination of anarcha-femenism through interviews and photography. It's badass, and I read most of it sitting on my toilet. That's where I get my best thinkin' done. My favorite part is the pictures. You can get in touch with these dudes at emmaspiel@aol.com. Lauren's in the Bay Area too now, so you should also just say hi to her if you are there.

I also got a book from Jimmy Reject who used to play in Dimestore Haloes. It's called *The Ememy's Within*. I was planning on putting this one in my bathroom too. That was until I found a page where Donny The Punk is in a bathtub and Jimmy Reject pisses on him. Then Jimmy writes that, "Donny let me do something that no girl ever would." Now I'll probably just read it in some other room. For more information on the book write Blueboy Productions at 115 W. Squantum St., #203, Quincy, MA 02171

Hail and Kill

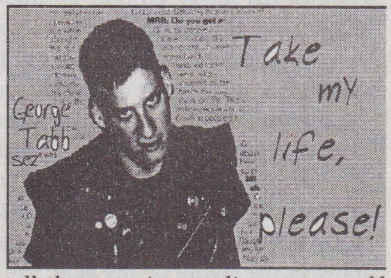
"Each day, you wake up and get out of bed knowing that there is shit waiting for you. Each day is a struggle, a battle and you must prepare for these battles, these wars. You have to be prepared. That is where the spirit of MANOWAR comes in. It is for everybody, both men and women, who have the fighting spirit. You either fight to win or your throw up your hands and admit that you are fucked." Fucking Joey DeMaio from MANOWAR, folks.

My Name Is Lubrano is fucking done and looking awesome. Actually, it's a lot like the real Lubrano in that regard: done and looking awesome. It's a collection of the first 15 columns I did for *MaximumRockNRoll*. It's like 75 pages long and has all the columns plus shitty punk layouts and pictures of stuff like MANOWAR, Lubrano, Fran Drescher, Beaker, pills, MINUTEMEN, traffic, record pressing machinery, prosthetic forearms, and much more. It's available on a sliding scale price of $3-$6ppd. directly from me at the address below.

Please don't write to: Wells Tipley, PO Box 772, East Setauket, NY, 11733 USA. Or email me at manowells@hotmail.com.

END NOTES:

1. MAN IS THE BASTARD.



"Please," the hot blonde chick says to me as I slowly down my beer at The Emerald Lounge here in Phoenix.

"Yeah," says her boyfriend in the red Riverdales t-shirt, "tell the story."

"I don't feel like it," I tell them, trying to distance myself from New York a bit as I sit in a bar in the desert that for all intents and purposes, is CBGBs.

"You're so cute," says the blonde.

"Okay," I tell her, because I'm a sucker for compliments, "I'll tell you the story of how I was a Ramone for a day."

*

So there I was, looking at myself in the mirror on the back wall of the studio. I looked like Dee Dee, what with the black spiky hair, five-dollar Rayban knockoffs, short sleeved black t-shirt, and sneakers. I sounded like Dee Dee, especially when I counted off "1-2-3-4" in that high-pitched whine, and sang "Wart Hog." And I certainly played like Dee Dee, what with the bass slung really low, down past my balls, and almost exclusively using rapid-fire down-strokes. To my right, on the other side of the stage, stood the guitar player. He was wearing a white Mosrite, a yellow t-shirt, faded blue jeans, yellow socks, and black sneakers. Johnny Ramone. Mr. Fashion. And behind me was Marky. The drummer. This in itself is amazing. What is more amazing, however, is that this was an audition. For the Ramones. The Johnny Appleseeds of Punk Rock. God. And there I was. But let me back up a bit...

The worst stomachache I ever had was when I was like eighteen. I remember lying on my mom and step-dad's couch, the blue one with the three mattresses, so when my brothers and I came to visit them in New York, we had a place to sleep. I was in extreme pain, and I remember my parent's friend, Richard, coming over and looking at me. I was holding my stomach, and I had a fever of like one hundred and four. He says, "Gee lad, you don't look so well. You look kinda pale. Like one of those Ramones people you are always going on about." Through my clenched teeth I told him to fuck off, which made my mom and stepdad Nick laugh. Finally, when I was able to fry an egg on my chest, I was taken to the family doctor.

As soon as I walk in the door, my doctor says, "Hi George.

You don't look so good. You look very pale. Like one of the Ramones guys you are always talking about or wearing on your shirts." I just nod my head. He tells me to go into the back examining room, and take off my clothes, which consist of a leather jacket, a Ramones t-shirt, sweatpants (I couldn't wear jeans 'cause my stomach was so fucking bloated), and sneakers. I tell him OK, and the nurse shows me the way.

I get into the back room and take off my clothes down to my underwear. I then sit on that table shaped thing with all the white paper all over it. It sticks to me 'cause I am so sweaty from the fever. Then my doctor walks in. He listens to my heart with that thingamajigger, and feels around my stomach. He then tells me to pull off my underwear, and lay on my side. I do. I hear him opening a packet of something, but can't see since I am not facing him. Suddenly I feel something going straight up my ass. It is his finger. I scream in pain, and he asks, "Does that hurt?" I scream "of course it fucking does!" He says, "oh," and continues to move his finger around up there. I scream some more, and finally he takes his finger out. Slowly. It feels like I just went to the bathroom on the table. But I didn't. Then the doctor tells me that there is something definitely wrong. I ask him if I can regain my dignity and put my underwear back on, he says to wait a second.

My doctor calls in the nurse who showed me to the room. My heart sinks into my feet. She is beautiful, as are all members of the opposite sex to an eighteen year-old virgin. She walks in and sees me laying on my side. She kinda half smiles at me, and I feel worse. Then she walks around to my backside, where my doctor is standing. He tells her he wants her to feel something, and before I know it, her finger is up my ass. I scream in pain some more, and she laughs. Finally she takes her finger out, and they both leave the room. I get dressed and walk out to the lobby where my mom and Nick and the doctor are talking. The doctor is telling them that he thinks maybe my appendix is bursting, and I need to get to the hospital. My mom and Nick look very worried, but I kinda don't really notice, since I am busy wondering if the nurse and doctor shoulda wiped my butt after they were through.

The next thing I know, I am at New York Hospital, the emergency room. My fever is still really high, and I have begun to hallucinate, as I often do when I get fevers. I also start to babble, which I often do as well. I look around me, and there are all sorts of injuries and such. One lumberjack-looking guy is holding his hand in a towel, and there is blood all over his lap and pants. Some Indian woman, with a dot on her head, is rocking back and forth, screaming in a high-pitched whine. Some guy, who I must assume is a cab driver, has a bloody head and face, and is bitching about someone cutting him off, and getting the fare first. And then there is some cop who keeps throwing up white stuff, which I assume are powdered donuts. Wonderful. I love New York.

Finally I am taken in an elevator with a doctor and a bunch of residents. The doctor explains to his students that I may be a classic example of an appendix rupture, and then pulls down my sweat pants and sticks his finger up my ass. I yelp in pain, and I swear I hear some of the residents laugh. The doctor feels around for a while, and then withdraws his finger. I somehow say through my delirium, "Wipe, toilet paper, wipe." No such luck. Suddenly I feel another finger go up my ass. Then another. And another. And so on. Not all at once, of course, just one finger from one resident at a time. They all feel around, roughly, I may add, and then withdraw from my backside. At this point, my stomach is not hurting nearly as much as my ass. Finally I hear a girl resident say it is her turn, and then feel her finger go up my ass. As she is feeling around, she puts her face in front of mine and I see her. She has long brown hair, green eyes, and nice white teeth. Cute. Suddenly she gets a look of recognition in her eyes, and I again feel my heart sink into my feet. She then says, "Hey, aren't you George, the guy from the band that can not be mentioned?" Stupid fever.

I am taken to an operating room where a doctor tells me he is going to take out my appendix. He also tells me I look really pale, like that New York Puerto Rican band, the Ramones. He then puts a mask over my face and shoots me up with sodium pentothal. I sing "Twenty-twenty-twenty four hours to go, I wanna be sedated," as I pass out.

I wake up in a hospital bed, with Nick and my mom by my side. I still have a very high fever, and ask Nick what is going on. He tells me that they removed my appendix, but there was nothing wrong with it. My mom looks really worried. I nod my head, and start to feel around to make sure they didn't remove anything else. I start to move my hand toward my crotch, under the sheets, of course, and suddenly feel something really smooth. Where my dick should be. It's Gone! Oh my God, they cut off my dick. My heart starts to race. I start to grasp around frantically, and finally find it, below the smooth skin. I sigh a breath of relief, as I realize that they only shaved off my pubic hair. Then I start to think about what they used to do that, and start to panic again. My mother asks me what's wrong, and I can almost see tears in her eyes. I force myself to relax, and tell her it's nothing, I'm fine.

I stay at the hospital for another week, while more tests are run on me. Finally the doctors figure out I have something called Camphlobacter, a bacterial infection. They begin to treat it with antibiotics, and my fever begins to go down. But that doesn't stop them from coming by everyday, with a bunch of residents, and sticking their fingers up my ass. I am beginning to feel like a one-finger bowling ball.

Also, while I am at the hospital, I kinda develop a crush on a nurse named Wanda. She is from Long Island, and has that cute accent. She and my mom become good friends, and Wanda looks after me really good. We really begin to like one another, but then it happened. It was my bowels. They decided to move. After like almost a week. And they didn't just move—it was like a mudslide. And I couldn't walk 'cause I was tied to an IV, and was stitched up. So I yelled for a bedpan, and really made a mess. Then Wanda came in to clean me up. Wanda. The nice girl from Long Island. The girl my mom liked. And there I was, helpless and butt-deep in shit. Anyway, it sucked. She kept telling me it was OK, and "normal," but I knew it wasn't. Here I was, this eighteen year-old virgin punk rocker, and this girl Wanda had to wipe my butt and clean me up. The next day I told my mom I didn't want Wanda around anymore. She asked why, but I demanded that she just do it. She did. I had a different nurse for the rest of my stay. An old woman I didn't feel sexually weird around. On the way out of the hospital, I ran into Wanda, who gave me her my phone number and asked me to call her for a date. I never did. Even though I was still a virgin, and she was really cool and great, I could never date a girl who did "that" with me. I am still banging my head against the wall.

Stomachaches came, and stomachaches went, and every time I went to the doctor's office, he stuck his finger up my ass. It got to the point where I'd walk into his office and just pull down my pants and lay on my side. It soon got to be that it did-

n't matter what was wrong, he was gonna stick his finger up there one way or another. I began to think that maybe it was my doctor, and he got thrills from invading my anus, so I went and saw another guy. He too stuck his finger up my ass. My ass has seen more fingers than a used piano. And eventually, I got used to it. Which brings us, of course, to the Ramones.

There I was, auditioning for the Ramones. Earlier that week, I had run into Dee Dee and Johnny, both within a half hour of one another. I first ran into Dee Dee, and he told me he quit the Ramones a couple of days ago. When I asked him why, he told me he was sick of it, and wanted to do other stuff. I told him I understood completely. I, didn't, of course. Then I ran into Johnny, who told me that Dee Dee just quit, and did I know any bass players. I kinda turned my head to the side like a dumb dog. He looked at me, and said nothing. Then I told him I played bass. Then it was his turn to cock his head like a dumb dog. Actually, more like a parrot. He then said, in his nasal, parroty voice, "George, I thought you played guitar." Doh. I explained to him that the bass and guitar were very similar. The only difference really being two extra strings on a guitar, so in reality, bass is easier. He said "oh." I told him I had a bass, and would love to audition. In reality, I had had a bass, but had given it to my old girlfriend. He said to call Monte, their tour manager, who I knew very well from having worked with them. Monte is like the fifth Ramone. He is this overweight middle-aged balding guy who tells the band what to do and when. When the band is, for instance, in the recording studio, and one of them has to take a leak, they raise their hand and say, "Monte, Monte, I gotta go pee-pee." I'm not kidding. I worked for them, remember. Anyway, I told Johnny I would, and he says he'd see me at the audition in a couple of days.

I remember practicing and practicing for that audition. I borrowed my bandmate's bass, and I would stand in front of my girlfriend Wendy and Nick and my mom for hours and hours, acting like Dee Dee while playing along to Ramones' albums. They all thought I was wonderful, and was like a real Ramone. And to tell you the truth, I was. I had that Ramone shit down cold. I mean, I'd been preparing for it for like ten years. And now I was ready. I'd play along with "Blitzkrieg Bop" and "Pet Semetary," which they played in a different key live than on the record. I'd burn through "Go Mental" and "Shock Treatment." Man, I was ready. The day of the audition, my mom, Nick, and Wendy wished me luck, and I went on the job interview of a lifetime.

I arrived to S.I.R. on 24th St., the place where the Ramones were holding their auditions. There were like a bunch of bass players there. I couldn't believe it. They were all standing around this hallway, waiting for their turn to show the Ramones what they got. There was this really tall guy with really curly hair, a fro, and he wanted to be a Ramone. There was this little, short, overweight guy, who was balding, and he wanted to be a Ramone. There was this black guy with a mohawk, and he wanted to be a Ramone. There was even a girl. I asked the little bald guy why he wanted to be a Ramone. He said, "It's a good gig, the money is right." I asked the curly-haired guy the same thing; he said, "I'd rather be in Van Halen, but this will have to do." What a bunch of fucking morons. Here they were, getting a chance to play with the best band in the world, and they didn't even care. I knew I had to play better than them. To be the true Ramone that I was inside. So I left them in the hall to be with one another, and went and sat on a couch and waited for my turn. One after one, the bass players filed in, played for like one minute, and left. On their way out, most of them bitched that they were better musicians, anyway, and didn't need this "gig." Assholes.

Finally it was my turn. I walked in the room and saw Johnny and Marky on stage. John said, "Hi George," in his bird-with-a-cold voice, and I said hello back. Then Monte said, "Oy Vey, George Tabb. What are you doing back? Couldn't hack it as a roadie, so here ya are, huh?" He then laughed, and everyone in the room did as well. I sorta laughed, nervously, and went about plugging in the bass to my digital tuner, and tuning it. Then Johnny walked over to me and stopped me. He said that using a digital tuner was not "Ramone-like," and to use the strobo-tuner. The antique piece of shit that both he and Dee Dee used for years. I said OK, and wasted twice the amount of time using that pile of junk. Finally I was ready to play, and both Johnny and Monte remarked how much I looked like Dee Dee. Johnny asked me what songs I knew, and I told him I knew 'em all. He called me a wise guy, and then gave me their set list. He said start, so I said, "Hey, we're the Ramones, and this one's called The Blitzkrieg Bop, 1-2-3-4!" and we all went into the song. It was amazing. It sounded great, and here I was, playing on stage with my idols. We got through that song, and Marky went into "Lobotomy." We did that, and I counted "1-2-3-4" and we went into "Rockaway Beach." I got to sing the songs as well as play them, since Joey wasn't there. We then played a whole bunch of songs, and the whole time, Monte sat there with a stunned look on his face. At one point, Monte said I was better than Dee Dee ever was. We played some more, and I made the mistake of playing "Rock 'n' Roll Radio" with some upstrokes. Marky stopped the song and said, "Play the song with all down strokes. Upstrokes are cheating. And Ramones don't cheat." Drummer. So, I played with all down strokes. Anyway, I was in there for almost an hour, almost sixty times longer than anyone else.

When we finally finished playing, and we were putting our guitars away, both Monte and Johnny walked up to me. They were both very excited, and both told me how great I was. Monte said, "Georgie Ramone, I like the sound of that" and Johnny smiled. I asked them if I did OK, and they said yes, and it was now between me and this guy, Chris (who, as it turns out, is CJ). I almost fainted. Then Johnny says to Monte, "Monte, drive Georgie Ramone home," and Monte drove me home in the Ramones van.

For the next week or so I was a wreck. One part of me knew I was in the Ramones, and the other part of me knew that no matter what I did, or how good I was, I was still gonna get a finger in my ass. I finally heard from Monte that they picked CJ, 'cause he was younger than me, and they needed young blood. I thought it was silly, that the Ramones were all in their mid-to-late forties, and here they picked some teenager over a 28-year-old, but whatever. I knew I was good. But still, it really hurt.

I went to the doctor last week for my yearly checkup. He asked me how I was doing, and I told him I was fine. We got to talking as I was undressing and preparing to be examined, and he asked me how my music was going, and whatever happened to those Ramones guys I used to always talk about and wear on my shirts. I told him they were still around. And so is this, he told me, as he put on his rubber glove and stuck his finger up my ass. For the first time, I smiled.

Take My Life, Please.

Endnotes:

1. Monte's book about the Ramones, *On The Road With The*

Ramones is out now. You can get it on Amazon. It's fucking great, very funny and the most true Ramones book I've ever read. Plus, I'm quoted in there! Yay!

2. "Joey Ramone Way" is the new street title of the corner of Bleecker and Bowery. Otherwise known as CBGB. It's about time a street was named after a punk rocker! I'm just wondering where Dee Dee Ramone Place will be? Avenue D and 4th Street?

3. Saw some killer shows here in P-town. Really love this band called The New Romantics. Also saw Toys That Kill. It was great to see Todd and Sean! Yay!!! And some of the people at shows, like Brian, Sean, Heidi Kim, and Will, rule.

4. www.georgetabb.com for info on my new book, which should be out in April on Soft Skull! Punk Rock forever!

This is my sixth year as a columnist for *MRR*. I'm still super stoked to be a part of this magazine. I want to take this time to remind people that *MRR* is now distributed primarily through DIY distros so get in touch about getting bundles to sell in your town, and make sure your local distro/record store/infoshop is carrying *MRR*. When I walked into the University of Maryland record co op in 1983, I knew precious little about hardcore/punk music. I bought a few 7"s—Government Issue, Vice Squad, Rudimentary Peni—and I saw an issue of *MRR* sitting on the counter. I picked it up because it looked cool and punk. I read that issue cover to cover, found out that my local college station broadcast the MRR radio show, and became an avid listener. I thought punk was strictly an American and English thing until I started reading the Brazillian, Japanese, and Finnish scene reports in *MRR* and hearing the radio show. That shit blew my mind. Soon I was ordering BCT tapes and sending envelopes full of cash to Disorder and Toxic Shock and Ratcage distros.

In today's information-saturated world we forget how important a lifeline *MRR* was back in the day. When hardcore was still small and new, *MRR* carried each month's breathless report from the front. I still think *Welcome to 1984* is the best comp LP ever and will never be topped. You might say that print zines are outdated. But nothing on the internet can compare with a consistent (20-plus years!) monthly summary of what's going on in hardcore punk. A quick calculation would lead me to believe that in the last 248 issues, *MRR* has reviewed almost 40,000 punk records. Sure it's easier to find information quickly on the internet—you can do a search for "gauze" and find factoids about the Japanese hardcore band, rather than wait for the new issue to have a scene report or review. But, you will rarely get the depth, critical thinking, and continuity that a magazine like *MRR* can provide from a website. So keep buying, reading, and contributing to *MRR*, now more than ever.

I'm pretty disgusted with the world political situation these days. The people who have managed to take over in the US have set the country on a course so reckless I really do miss Reagan. The insane neo-imperialism, the dismantling of environmental protections, abortion rights, free speech, workers' rights, and the swing to the radical right are shocking, to say the least. I'm amazed so many people buy into the blatant propaganda. I've studied quite a bit of history and one topic that continues to intrigue me is European imperialism in the 19th and early 20th centuries. One of the main things to understand about imperialism is that although it was often justified for military and economic reasons, ultimately the drive for empire was psychological. Modern cost/benefit analysis have shown that the cost of maintaining overseas Empires was a break-even proposition at best. Economic exploitation of nations is much more profitably undertaken by control of industry and finance than by outright force.

Most efficient capitalistic countries got out of the empire business pretty quickly after the Second World War. A few more retrograde states (USSR, South Africa) persisted into the early 1990s. By the 21st century, it seemed that old-fashioned Imperialism had been more or less rejected by history. Indeed, neo-colonialism has managed to reap huge profits for the elites both of the developed countries and the nations they exploit for the last fifty plus years. Japan, for instance, gained almost all of its war aims peacefully through economic domination of Asia rather than outright military domination. Neo-colonialism is so effective because a big part of equation is the local elite that plunders its own nation's resources in the name of its own people, then diverts the proceeds into Swiss bank accounts while the working class struggles. In this regard, most developing countries just exchanged a foreign exploiter for a local one, but nothing really changed.

The driving force behind most 19th century European empires was not economic or military, but the desire to prove the fitness and superiority of the nation state. In an age when social Darwinism was in vogue, the idea that different races were destined to rule or be ruled led many to believe that each race on earth was in a life or death competition with the others, and the only the strong would survive. Ultimately, I think this is what led most countries to set up overseas empires, and got tiny Belgium and Portugal into the business of conquering vast tracts of Africa.

In walks the Bush administration and the Neo Conservative National Security State. The drive to dominate the Persian Gulf region was facilitated by the tragic events of Sept 11 and the so-called war on terrorism. The bizarre doctrine of preventative war (as opposed to preemptive war) and the invasion and occupation of Iraq lead one to believe that decades of foreign policy experience has been thrown out the window. And indeed it has, because what we are seeing is a return to old-fashioned 19th century imperialism. I think at the root of the Bush clique's drive to dominate the gulf and vanquish Iraq is this same sense that America has to prove that it is the strongest, most powerful, most righteous nation, and that all others must submit or perish. I fear that this is also the dying gasp, the final spasm of violence of a dying empire striking out to prove it's still in the ring. And after all this bloodshed, why is the gas still so expensive?

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To me one of the most important "proto punk" artists of the 1970s was Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers. Richman was from the Boston suburbs and was influenced by local gigs by the Velvet Underground. He got a group together in 1970 that struggled for a while until a red-hot line-up solidified in 1971. Richman is my favorite character from the proto punk scene of the late 60s and early 70s because he was so dug in against the hippie aesthetic of the day. I have to admit, I like the Stooges better musically and the MC5 had the political line. But Richman was so uninfected by all the flower power bullshit. Here he was

wearing straight leg jeans, short hair, advocating a primitive form of straight edge and playing raw, rocking, 50s-inspired rock and roll while everyone else was long hair, bell bottoms, drugs, and overblown psychedelic concept albums.

The Modern Lovers' classic material was recorded in 1972 over several sessions as demos for various labels—one set of demos was produced by John Cale, the others by Kim Fowley. Neither of these sessions generated enough label interest to garner an LP, and only two tracks were released on a compilation in the Modern Lovers own era. Ironically, after punk took off in 1976, the Cale sessions were re issued as an LP (*Modern Lovers*, on Beserkely Records) and later the Fowley sessions were bootlegged as *The Original Modern Lovers* LP (Mohawk? Records). Richman soon outgrew minimalist primitive rock and roll and became more of a poet/singer songwriter type guy and is still around today, I believe. However, those two LPs worth of demos are what we'll examine today.

Grossly underestimated and overlooked, the Modern Lovers blasted out some of the absolute best fuzzed-out, minimalist rock music of all time. Richman was disgusted with the excess and decadence of the late 60s hippie scene and strove to recapture the high-energy excitement of the original wild 50s rockers and 60s garage scene. The Modern Lovers guitar sound was totally distorted, and their organ was overdriven and fuzzed-out as well. The best Modern Lovers tracks are stripped down to pure rock energy, there is not one note more than needed to convey the point. In an era where "minimalism" is being thrown around to describe all sorts of overproduced rock music, we need to hear what truly primal, stripped-down, bare bones rock and roll is. Indeed, "Don't Let Our Youth Go to Waste" is so stripped-down and minimal that there are no instruments! Just Jonathan singing to the tune of the song. This is music so pure and direct it needs no embellishment. Richman's lyrics celebrated the suburbs, rock and roll, and cruising, in anthems like "Roadrunner." His expression of loneliness and desperate alienation are palpable in songs like "Girlfriend" and "Walk Up the Street." You can hear in his voice that this guy didn't really fit in and was searching for something. And you just can't beat the off the wall tracks like "Pablo Picasso" (never got called an asshole). And while everyone else was fucked up on downers or exploring religious cults and shit, here was a guy singing "I'm Straight" and doing it loud and proud. (the Crucial Youth cover of this track is pretty dismal.)

I don't think rock critics or label execs liked or "got" Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers in their day. True genius was there in the form as rock and roll poet laureate and some fuzzed out raw garage burning ragers. But this early form of punk was to go unheard until after bands like the Ramones and Pistols put punk on the map and in the headlines. I'd have to say though, that I rock the Modern Lovers a lot more than either of the aforementioned bands these days. The band didn't stay together long enough to capitalize on the later wave of punk, which is probably for the best. Like a voice of pure mad genius from the wilderness, the Modern Lovers had the shit nailed down before almost anyone else had a clue. I can't recommend the classic Modern Lovers material enough. You have to use care when hunting this stuff down, because the Modern Lovers never recorded an album, so most stuff that's available is cobbled together from demos and live tracks of varying qualities. The essential material is the Modern Lovers LP (black with a blue heart on the cover) and the Original Modern Lovers bootleg of the Fowley sessions (has goofy romance magazine stuff on the cover) but use care, because later editions and CD versions have different/missing tracks.

Andy was this Nam Vet I knew through Vietnam Veterans Against the War-Winter Soldier Organization and the Santa Cruz Veterans Coop in 1975. He was six five, a huge bearded mountain of a man usually dressed in a fatigue jacket with his last name stenciled over the pocket whose mellifluous southern drawl was Mississippi born and raised. He's the only red redneck I've ever known.

"Poor white working folk with necks burned from toiling long hours in the hot sun," Andy once reprimanded me when I used the term redneck as an insult and a synonym for racist. "I'm a redneck, proud of it."

Andy even called his politics hillbilly socialism. His father drove trucks, his mother worked the line at a chicken parts factory, so Andy had been too poor to avoid conscription and Vietnam. Army infantry. Grunt. Close to half his combat unit was black, leaving the white working-class kids a close second what with the smattering of Puerto Ricans and other Latinos. The unit's leadership, the military officers were all white arrogant greenhorn West Point graduates, needless to say.

"Being a southern boy, I actually had a lot more black friends than the other white guys in the unit." Andy told me over a joint. "They figured, since I was a racist southern cracker and all, at least they knew where I stood. The brothers into black racial awareness figured I had my own white racial consciousness and they could respect that. Fucked with their heads when they found out I was a com-myoon-ist!"

He drew out the word and laughed, his laugh shredding into a cough laced with marijuana smoke. Andy had been the only white person told of a plan by the black soldiers to take out, or frag the white officers leading the unit. Andy had been able to tell a lefty comrade a little higher up the chain of command to avoid the intended targets, thus saving the friend's life.

It's June of 1975 to be more precise. Saigon has fallen to the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong the month before. The VVAW/WSO and the Vets Coop have a literature table set up in a park for a local Progressive Faire. It's me and two vets at the table; thin wiry Alex who got addicted to methamphetamine in Vietnam as an Army Ranger sniper, and Andy.

Alex and Andy are regaling me with Vietnam service stories. Most of the Vietnam vets I know are always talking about Nam, obsessively so. It's a brilliant sunny day in the park and I have a joint going. I always have the best dope in Santa Cruz, but it doesn't stop the two from commenting that nothing is as good as the grass they smoked in Nam. It doesn't stop them from smoking my weed either.

A guy comes up to our table, curious in a belligerent sort of way. He's young, tall, clean cut, with the build of a jock. Turns out he's some combination of New Age religious wingnut and human potential movement junkie. He'd done some Baba Free John, some Werner Erhard, some L. Ron Hubbard, some Bagwan Shree Rashneesh, some of this and that cult and sect. He gets into an argument with Alex over Vietnam, and Alex starts

rattling on about the entire history of America's imperialistic involvement in Southeast Asia at his usual speed freak pace. He's on the US air war, the horrific attempt to carpet bomb an entire country back to the Stone Age, when the guy raises a confident hand to stop Alex.

"You know why the Vietnamese were bombed, don't you?"

"Why's that?" Alex stutters, his train of thought suddenly derailed. Andy leans in to catch his words of wisdom, hand to ear mockingly.

"The Vietnamese weren't centered." The guy smiles a smug grin. "They didn't get 'It,' they weren't right with the universe. We create our own reality, our own heaven or hell right here and now by whether or not we have the right attitude and orientation. Good things come to people with a good mental orientation, bad things happen to people with a bad mental attitude."

Andy is giving this guy a curious look, with an alarmed arched eyebrow. Alex is sputtering, "The US killed hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese men, women and children, bombed them into oblivion because they had a bad attitude? Because they weren't centered?"

"It was the universe's doing, not ours." The guy rocks back and forth on his feet, clearly enjoying his sense of spiritual superiority. Andy steps around back of him, still looking him over with bulging, serious eyes. "They weren't right with the universe."

"Well, they got right pretty damned quick when the Communists took over a month ago," Alex snapped. "In case you hadn't noticed, we're not bombing them anymore."

"The communists didn't 'get centered,' we lost our center." The guy wags a finger to correct Alex. He's ignoring Andy, who's on his other side now, bending low then soaring high to give him the once over from head to toe. "We've lost 'It.' We're no longer right with..."

"Excuse me buddy," Andy interrupts with a raspy drawl. "But you don't look too centered yourself."

For such a big man Andy is fucking quick. The right hook comes out of nowhere, thudding into the guy's face. There's an audible pop.

"Aw, you broke my nose you asshole." He's holding his bleeding bent nose, sitting in the grass from where Andy's punch dropped him.

"Buddy, I didn't break your nose," Andy squats down and gives him a shit-eating grin. "The universe did 'cause you weren't centered. Cause you just don't get it."

We are still rolling around on the lawn, laughing uproariously, when the guy brings a cop to arrest Andy. We swear up and down between gales of laughter pushed to tears that Andy had nothing to do with breaking the guy's nose, that his own bad mental attitude broke his nose. Bewildered, and also impressed by Andy's size, the cop decides to get the guy some much-needed immediate medical attention.

The absurd New Age mantra that we create our own reality is merely an extension of a very American notion that we are the captains of our own destiny and therefore fully responsible for our personal condition. The rich and powerful deserve their wealth and privilege. You can become successful by thinking successfully. The poor are poor because they are basically lazy and like being poor. Women are raped because they ask for it. The notion is not eastern at all. In fact, it's a violent corruption of the eastern spirituality that New Age pseudo-mysticism claims to represent. In the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism, what we consider reality—the world around us—is illusion. The point however is to experience the Dr. Bronner "all one" reality behind the illusion, not to create another solipsistic illusion and proclaim it reality.

I much prefer Karl Marx's assertion in the *18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* that "People make their own history under conditions not of their own choosing." It emphasizes the collective nature of making history (eg, reality), and it emphasizes the normal limitations to human action. I say normal because it's possible to cite extreme examples where every aspect of human freedom and capacity is stripped from the individual, as in the Soviet gulags or the Nazi concentration camps. What we're left with under such conditions is what Viktor Frankl elegantly described as "the last of the human freedoms" in *Man's Search for Meaning*:

We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms -- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

Not that this last of human freedoms, our capacity to determine our own state of mind under any given circumstance is exempt from misdirection, as Tadeusz Borowski made abundantly clear in his grim short story "Auschwitz, Our Home (A Letter):"

Despite the madness of war, we lived for a world that would be different. For a better world to come when all this is over. And perhaps even our being here is a step towards that world. Do you really think that, without the hope that such a world is possible, that the rights of man will be restored again, we could stand the concentration camp even for one day? It is that very hope that makes people go without a murmur to the gas chambers, keeps them from risking a revolt, paralyses them into numb inactivity. It is hope that breaks down family ties, makes mothers renounce their children, or wives sell their bodies for bread, or husbands kill. It is hope that compels man to hold on to one more day of life, because that day may be the day of liberation. Ah, and not even the hope for a different, better world, but simply for life, a life of peace and rest. Never before in the history of mankind has hope been stronger than man, but never also has it done so much harm as it has in this war, in this concentration camp. We were never taught to give up hope, and this is why today we perish in gas chambers.

The dynamic between hope and revolt is often reversed when people make their own history under conditions not of their own choosing, that is under reality as we know it. In this Marx, who relied on the inexorable immiseration of the working-class under capitalism to bring about a social revolution, was misguided as well. Yes, people can be driven down to a state of abject misery from which they have absolutely nothing left to lose, and revolt is inevitable. What is forgotten is the capacity for people to endure suffering beyond reason, beyond any reasonable expectation of revolt. As often as not, and the history of revolt bears this out, people rise up when a temporary improvement in circumstances occurs and a glimmer of hope arises. East German workers rebelled in 1953 upon the death of Stalin, and Hungarian workers instigated a full-blown social revolution after Khrushchev's inner party revelations of Stalin's crimes in 1956. In this country, the civil rights movement in the 1950's, and the countercultural/New Left movements of the 1960's were nurtured in part by the growing affluence and rising expectations of post-war America.

No reason to explain why I'm thinking about Vietnam now that we're "waist deep in the Big Muddy" of Iraq, is there?

OUCH... Last column, I attributed the first two quotes from Karl Marx to the *Paris Manuscripts* and the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* respectively. They are two different names for the same work. I made the mistake, intent as I was to quickly cull relevant quotes from various collections of Marx's early writings that have been published under a variety of titles over the years. The best collection out there these days is *Karl Marx: Early Writings* by Penguin Classics by the way.

DOUBLE OUCH... As anyone who has visited my website at www.huahuacoyotl.com in the past year knows, it doesn't really exist anymore. I still have my "on the brink of war" postings up, and I haven't done anything with the rest of the webpage in over a year. That's not likely to change any time soon either, unless I get a whole lot of extra time away from my day job and evening writing to work on it. I'm in the process of rewriting my end blurb to reflect this fact, so this column it just reads...

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligan3@mindspring.com.

I've broken away from my fear of writing on my laptop in public, in an effort to allow myself to write somewhere other than my bedroom with the enormous double bed that beckons a little too earnestly. So although I think it's gross and if you know me you've probably heard me talk about the way these odd electronic machines essentially alter the environment they invade, I can't be the only person sitting at home, trying to write, when every goddamn café in this post-dot-com town is full of these contraptions. There are, of course, a few sacred spaces, but this café, which has a Ms. Pacman machine and a computer in the corner, is not one of them. So I'm sitting my little ass down next to various burnt-out SF communists discussing the future of the city, a goth girl telling her friend about her first instant messaging experience—"it was very moving," she said—and I'm getting over feeling like a yuppie. Maybe I'll become a total tool and get a cell phone. My mother told me yesterday, "You can't believe how liberating it is." God, man, I want to be liberated, but I don't see it happening by people being able to reach me *all the time.* When I run films for the film festivals, I have a beeper and a cell, given to me by the film society for the duration of the festival. It always makes me feel like I have a modern version of the old bells they put on secretaries' desks, you know, *bing bing I need service right now, Miss!* If that's liberation, maybe I'll live in the dark ages a few more years.

I had the odd idea that I was gonna actually try to write a music column this month, which is not really what I do. But I am gonna mention a few local bands that I think are worth checking out if you happen to make it out here or if they ever manage to get away.

Cookie Tuff, burlesque dancer, ex-zinester, and former drummer of Subtonix, is playing drums with ex-members of the Little Deaths and the Knives. For those of you who were into Subtonix, this band falls into a similar genre—arty, sorta no-wave, influenced by bands like the Slits, X-Ray Spex, and the Screamers—but unlike the later Subtonix stuff, you punk rock puritans will be happy to know there is a guitar. The have an upcoming EP on Cochon Records. You can contact me for more info.

If you're into that sort of sound, you should also check out Von Iva, a band named after two of the members' great-grandmothers, that's getting a lot of local attention. The band was almost called Balloons, so we really lucked out with the band-name decision. I really don't know if I could write about an all-woman band named Balloons in my column. Anyhow, Von Iva's a lot of fun, with ex-members of another one of my favorite now-defunct SF bands, Clone. The bass totally drives the band and it is heavy, smoky, and powerful as hell. Belting vocals, live drums, and a trained keyboard player—she's not just playing the same three notes over and over—complete the sound. Even *I* don't miss the guitar, and I always miss the guitar. Anyhow, their live shows are a lot of fun—you really get a sense that these girls love the hell out of each other, and that they love the hell out of making art together.

I don't know how many of you have metal in your past, or metal in your present, but plenty of us do. I personally don't know shit about metal and when my friend who loves all that obscure Norwegian shit has tried to talk to me about it, all of the references are as foreign to me as if we were talking about soft rock or something. I'm a punk, albeit a punk who will get pretty teary-eyed with the combination of a little beer and a scratched vinyl rendition of "Every Rose has its Thorn" or "Patience," and that's just how it is; I grew up in the late 80s and I am very unlucky in love. So yeah, bad, mainstream, trite 80s metal I know, but all the nuances of the modern metal scene sort of elude me. That said, I have a weakness for tough, heavy music. Lost Goat, the metal three-piece that sold hand-screened g-strings and managed to stay together for a long time in this town, attracting punx and metallers alike, broke up earlier this year because their front-woman moved to the cold cold cold town of New York City. I mean, where else do you go when you're sick of SF? Des Moines? The loss of that band, unique in the SF scene primarily because of the quality of their music and the diversity of their audience (from dykes with full sleeve tattoos and pigtails to *dudes* working a retro ZZ Top look) was a real bummer. I'd heard rumors that their tuff-as-hell drummer Tina Gordon—who may look small but can hit as hard as the best of them, with a focused intensity that never ceases to make me remember why I fell in love with rock 'n' roll in the first place—was starting a new project, Night after Night. I later found out that she was still playing with the guitarist from Lost Goat, and ex-members of Dead and Gone. In the course of my Saturday night, I got to hang out for their first sort-of public show, a run-through of their set for friends in their practice space. I'd been up since seven in the morning, and we were drinking Meister Brau. They tore it up, let themselves go with the intensity of their music, but with a sense of humor. It was fucking fun as hell, that heavy music heavy with potential. They're not playing out quite yet, but keep your eyes open in early 2004.

OK, folks, I guess that's about it, I'm already late for my

deadline. But I do want to say that we all need to make time for what we love, and to take our art (or activism, or whatever it is that we actually *live* for) more seriously. The beauty of this community is not based on a few predictable chords, or on making out with other cute stinky people, but on the choice to live your life for the fanzine that fifty people will read instead of the marketing manual that fifty thousand people will read. We have to believe in ourselves and each other like our fucking lives depend on it, and acknowledge that the props we seek many never be forthcoming. And oh, if you've never read *Another Country* by James Baldwin, please do. Please read a lot. Taking the time to think about the difficult questions we all face in the daily course of our lives, away from the music and the TV and all of the general screaming noise we are surrounded with, is an opportunity for sanity in a sick world.

Keep rockin'. You can always write me, care of *MRR*. My PO box is now defunct.

I've watched lots of television coverage about the gay marriage debate. It really infuriates me that every single commentator utterly misses the point. For example, check out these excerpts from a recent exchange on *The McLaughlin Group*.

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN: Conservatives around the country are on red alert about gay marriage. The Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled this week that gay couples might not be denied the right to marry. This ruling grants gays broader rights than same-sex couples in any other state. In a 4-3 Massachusetts majority opinion, the judges wrote that the state constitution, quote, "forbids the creation of second-class citizens," unquote. Marriage confers certain rights not held by other same-sex partners, including the right to file a joint federal tax return, inherit property, get dependent health care coverage, make decisions for a partner who is gravely ill or make decisions for a couple's children. The ruling has ignited a firestorm of controversy and projected the issue into the forefront of American politics. Some are calling it the cultural issue of the year. Question: Will this become the wedge issue of 2004, Pat Buchanan? And would you define what a wedge issue is.

PAT BUCHANAN: A wedge issue is something that splits your base and splits your opposition right in half. And this certainly does that right to the Democratic Party. We're going to have—because of this Massachusetts decision, you're going to have referenda on ballots. You're going to have defense of marriage acts at the local level. You're going to have a revision of the Defense of Marriage Act at the national level. You may have a constitutional amendment. And films of gay couples are going to be put onto TV ads and the bottom line is going to say, "*This* is Howard Dean's America."

MCLAUGHLIN: Do you think Republicans could overplay this, Pat?

BUCHANAN: You don't want to get into gay-bashing, and the president should probably stay above it.

ELEANOR CLIFT: Yeah. And if Republicans try to run on this, there could be a backlash. But look, Howard Dean was handed a court decision, just like the legislature and the governor were handed a court decision in Massachusetts. And every court in this country is eventually going to rule this way because you cannot deny constitutional rights to committed, same-sex partners. And the Supreme Court cleared the way for that earlier this year

MCLAUGHLIN: Question for Tony. In a close election, a wedge issue can have a disproportionate and controlling impact—true or false? And this could be the one to do it?

TONY BLANKLEY: Yes, definitely. The turnout of conservative Christians in the electorate ranges between 13 and 15 or 16 percent. If it's 13 percent, Republicans tend to lose close elections. If it's at 15 or 16 percent, they tend to win them. And *this* could very well get it to 17 or 18 percent.

MCLAUGHLIN: You know how abortion was handled. You can skirt it, right? "I'm personally opposed to it"—let's say; this is a standard offering—"however, we must obey the law." How would you skirt this issue if you were a politician and you knew it was too hot to handle, Mort?

MORT ZUCKERMAN: Well, I mean, I'd see if there's a way to duck and run, which is the obvious way that politicians handle it. I don't have an easy way to duck.

MCLAUGHLIN: I'll give you a suggestion: I believe this should be left up to the states.

CLIFT: Absolutely. And that is a Howard Dean position. It leaves it up to the states and calls it civil unions, and leaves marriage and the sacrament up to the churches and synagogues.

MCLAUGHLIN: Is that a perfect argument? Why not? I don't like this law, but I think it should be left up to the states. Keep the feds out of it. That's the way you handle it.

ZUCKERMAN: That is not going to satisfy the gays.

MCLAUGHLIN: They want the semantics as well as—

CLIFT: Well, they'll get more probably, eventually. But not in this election cycle.

MCLAUGHLIN: Don't they deserve it? Isn't it discrimination? Aren't the four judges right? What do you think?

CLIFT: I think they would be satisfied with equal rights when it comes to insurance and medical rights.

MCLAUGHLIN: I want to ask you a question. It's the exit question. Will the Republican party succeed in using gay marriage as a wedge issue next year, yes or no? Tony Blankley.

BLANKLEY: Yes. I think it's been handed to them; they're going to use it. *Your* alternative won't work. They'll want a commitment to a constitutional amendment and opposition to civil unions.

MCLAUGHLIN: Don't you think the likelihood is the Republicans will overplay their hand? Yes or no?

BLANKLEY: There's always a good likelihood.

MCLAUGHLIN: There always is.

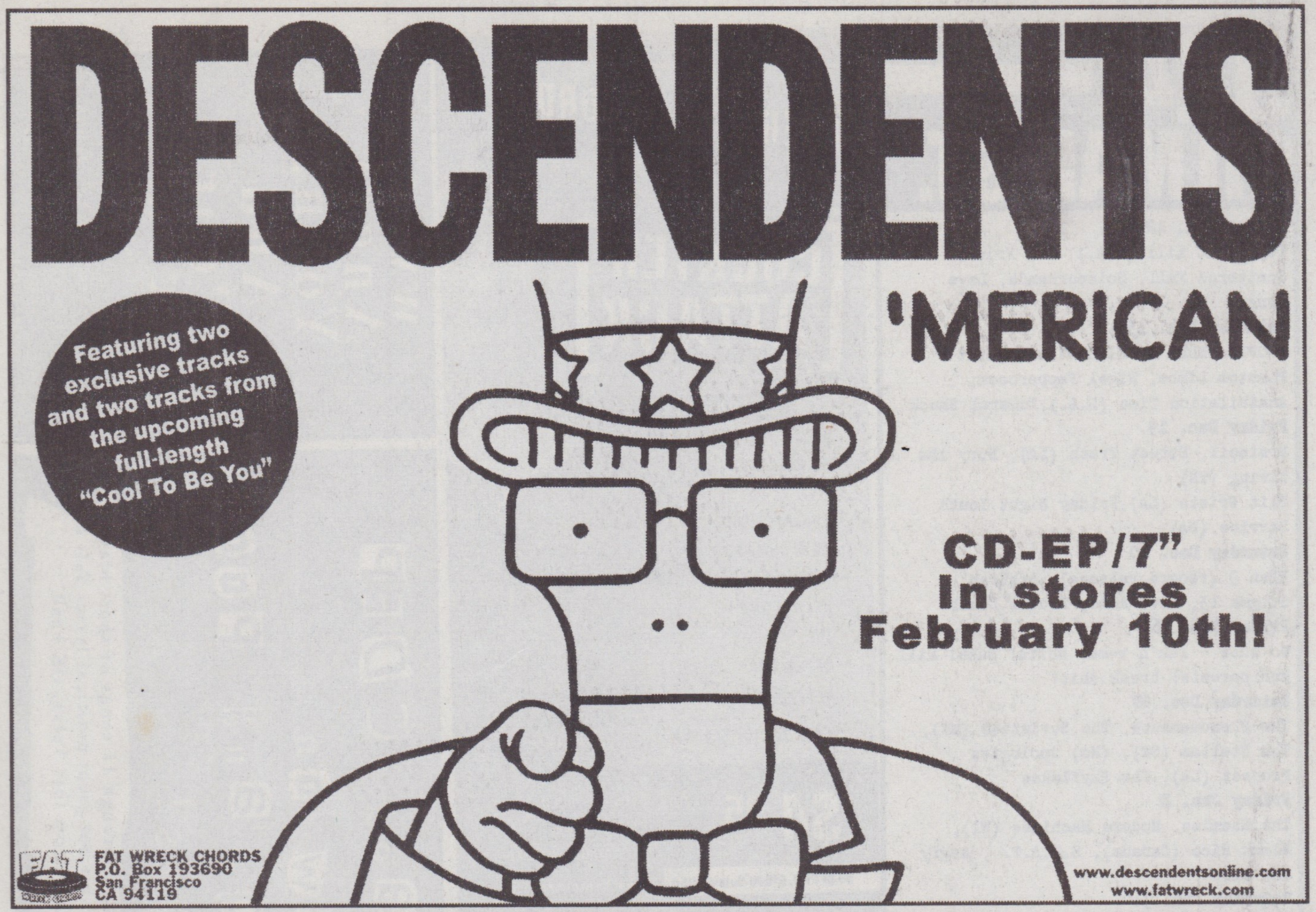
CLIFT: And you're never going to get a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage to go through the Congress.

ZUCKERMAN: Never. I agree with that.

BUCHANAN: But John, in the presidential debates, it will come right out of the box, the first or second question: "Do you believe homosexuals have a right to get married? Would you legislate to prevent that?" People are going to have to answer the question.

MCLAUGHLIN: Leave it up to the states.

As is always the case with these Sunday morning political programs, gay voices are totally shut out of the conversation. I saw similar debates on three other Sunday morning shows, and in all cases they never asked gay people what they thought. Imagine what it's like to be gay as see something like this. Here's how I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PEOPLE UNDER NO KING zine benefit
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Friday Dec. 19
Brainoil, Street Trash (LA), Bury the Living (TN)
Slit Wrists (LA),Friday Night Youth Service (WA)
Saturday Dec. 20
Plan 9 (record release), Ashtray, Stigma 13, Live Ammo, Brutal Death
Friday Dec. 26
No show - fuk'n x-mas shitz! puke! kill yer parents! break shit!
Saturday Dec. 27
The Phenomenauts, The Soviettes (MN), The Stellas (OK), (No) Apologies Project (LA), The Skyflakes
Friday Jan. 2
The Enemies, Modern Machines (WI), Black Rice (Canada), S.H.A.T. , Angry for Life
Saturday Jan. 3:
Himsa (WA), To See You Broken (WA), Assailant (WA)
Friday Jan. 9th
The Boils (PA), Cranked Up (PA), Cropknox
Saturday Jan. 10
LEFT OFF THE DIAL label benefit
Scissorhands, This is My Fist, Ye Olde Buttfuck (FL), Chased and Smashed (OR)
Friday Jan. 16
The Velvet Teen, Plus Ones, Addicted to Fiction (NY), Squab (LA)
Saturday Jan. 17
Wrangler Brutes (L.A.), Jewdriver, Shemps (NY)
Saturday Jan. 24
Babyland, Drk Scrt Lv
Saturday Jan. 31
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Nake Aggression, The Frisk
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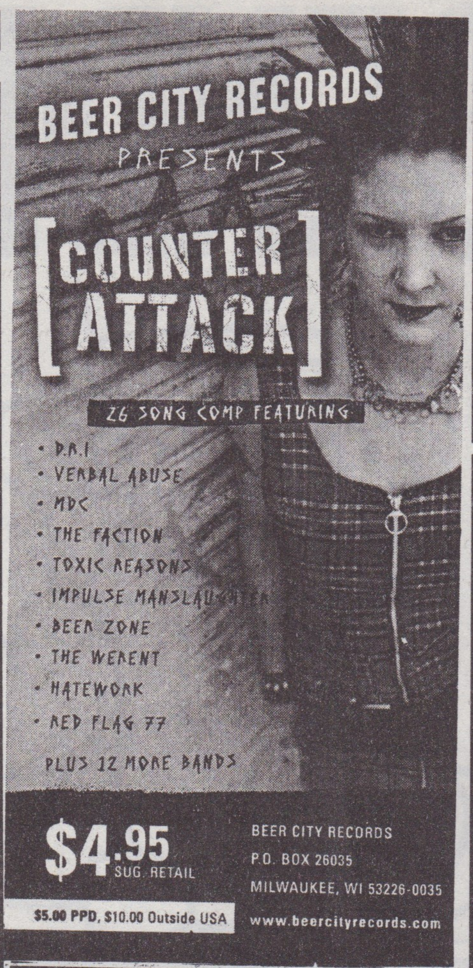

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see such a show through my point of view.
HOST: "Hello, welcome to our show. We're going to discuss gay issues with our panel of experts guaranteed to include no gay people. What do we think of gays having the equal right to get married?"
PANELIST: I think it's best to avoid the question.
HOST: Yes, on that we all agree. But if we can't, what should we do?
RIGHT-WING GUY: Stop gay marriage by any means.
MODERATE LADY: Let someone else like judges or the states deal with it, and try not to let it soil your hands.
HOST: But we all agree these are wedge issues. On the right, you can use it to wedge the Democrats in half, because most people are *not* for gay marriages, and on the left you can use it to wedge the Republicans in half because if they come out too strong against gays you can call them bigots!
ENTIRE PANEL: Yes! We all agree!!
How would *you* like to be a wedge issue? On one side you have conservatives rubbing their hands with glee at the dream of masses of Christians flocking to the polls, trying to make you feel like *you're* the one who'll help keep Bush in power. On the other side you have moderates afraid to really stand up for you and say too much in your behalf, just hoping the Republicans sink to Nazi levels in vileness so they can look better in comparison, but never actually speaking up for your rights.
You know you could say an awful lot in your own behalf if only you were allowed to express your point of view.
But you're never asked to be on the panel.
It's like having an all-white panel discuss African American issues, or having a panel of "dance-pop" fans discuss the merits of punk rock. If these programs were ever really interested in discussing the gay marriage issue honestly, they'd have a panel of queers on to discuss it. Let pro-marriage-choice queers and anti-marriage-choice queers square off. Ultimately, I think this is also a choice issue. "Are you pro-choice or anti-choice?" It's a question just as correctly applied to gay marriage as it is to abortion or birth control. Of course in my mind, the ability to have the right to make abortion and birth control choices shouldn't even *be* debated. They should just be a given by now. It's offensive to me that many conservatives think they have the right to tell people what to do with their bodies. It's just as offensive to me for anyone to put boundaries on how people should structure their personal relationships.
Imagine if my voice were allowed to be on one of these shows.
HOST: For some unknown reason we have a gay guy in the studio to discuss gay marriage.
ME: Let me ask you Mr. Host. Do you have a wife?
HOST: Why, er …yes…
ME: I think it should be left up the state whether you should've been allowed to get married. If your state said "no," you could've moved to some other state until you found one where it's OK. Good luck in your new home!
HOST: Well, now…
ME: And I think I should put a talk show on TV where gays only will discuss whether you heterosexuals should even be allowed to get married…or have "civil unions" if you must. This is really a question for *us* to decide about you after all.
HOST: Now wait just a….
ME: Oh, I know what you are going to say. *The idea of heterosexual marriages* is so politically divisive! It's better not to discuss such wedge issues because they only make people argue. But we have no choice, because now the courts are out of control. They're actually granting equal rights! That's why we have to change the constitution and get rid of these threats to society! When we've changed the constitution so only gays can marry and you people can't, at last we'll have won the "culture war!" Ah, the glory of war! That's what life and love is all about isn't it? Turning everything into war?
HOST: We'll pause now for commercial.
And after I've picked my sarcastic little butt out of the alley behind the television studio…I'd go home confident that for a split second there, these people would've finally seen themselves through my eyes.

For as long as I can remember, going to shows has been one of the most important things in my life. I call it my life's blood, and I'm not kidding. Seeing bands has been what my life has been based around. I can remember a month or a year based on what bands I saw and where. It's like a timeline. For me, getting to those shows is not a choice or a spontaneous decision, it's what weeks and months are spent looking forward to, or planning. It's always been that way, and so now when I find myself limited in my schedule to get to those all-important shows, it's crippling.

I can remember a time when I was at ABC No Rio every single Saturday regardless of who was playing. And I can remember talking about great upcoming shows with friends only to have one of them say, "oh, I have to work that Saturday so I can't come," and all I could think was, how could you possibly have a job that would interfere with a show? How can you live that way? How do you manage to make that choice? I mean, my friend was bummed, really bummed, but he accepted it. I found it hard to imagine. I can remember another time when a good friend had the opportunity to follow his favorite UK band around for a week or two, I think he even was asked to play drums for them at some point, and he had to pass because of his job. Again I remember thinking, "you have the opportunity to tour with your all-time favorite band—fuck the job." But sometimes life catches up with you and you have to make hard decisions. Still, for me working life around shows has always been the priority.

Consequently I feel like I can almost count on one hand the shows I have regrets about missing. And they make kinda good stories too. The first one was Black Flag in 1986, or was it '87? They played in my hometown at the university, but I had mono and couldn't go. I had the kind of illness that was technically contagious, but I felt fine. I remember kneeling in the kitchen pleading and begging my parents to go see Black Flag; telling them how important it was—that it was *Black Flag,* and I had to see them. I even said I'd stand outside on the balcony with a paper bag over my head, but stupid as that would have been, they held fast and refused, in what I remember as one of the only times my parents really said "NO." A couple of years later, when I was living in Boston, Metallica and the Cult—two of my favorite (popular) bands at the time—were touring together. I was so excited that they were touring together, but tickets were $17 and I thought that was too much. $17! Laughable now, really. Needless to say, I beat myself up over that one immediately.

A couple months later, while still on the And Justice For All album tour, they played in Boston again, this time with Queensryche or some equally uninteresting band. But I said, "this time I'm going no matter what." I went to Tower Records on the day tickets went on sale. This time they were $25. I had never been to an arena rock show or shelled out that kind of money for a band (I still haven't, I'm kinda proud to say), but I was hell-bent on seeing Metallica. The only seats available were in the back, at the top, and I just couldn't bring myself to fork over that money. Still, to this day, I regret both of those missed chances. Years later, when my mom was working for Metallica concert at the arena in my hometown in PA, long after they'd cut their hair and gotten lame, I tried once again to go and buy a ticket. This time I think they were more like $40 or even more. Fortunately it was sold out. I no longer want to see them.

A couple years ago, when His Hero is Gone were touring and they were top of my list of favorite bands, I decided for some unexplainable reason *not* to drive to DC at the last minute for their show. Within a month, on that same tour, they called it quits. I kicked myself some more. Just recently I had to miss Submission Hold play in Richmond, due to work. But I found out that they were playing in Philly with La Fraction, Born Dead Icons, 1905, and Witchhunt on a Sunday. I was so stoked; I made plans to go to the city of punk for what was a dream show for me. At the last minute I had probably the only other mental freakout that I can recall and ended up not going. I knew even at that moment that I would regret it, and for the past couple months every time I hear mention of La Fraction, Born Dead Icons, or Submission Hold I want to cry.

And then last week From Ashes Rise and Kylesa played in Richmond. These are two of my favorite bands, period. Bands that I will move mountains to see, drive six hours, or even fly to the west coast for. And here they are playing in my town with Axehandle, my husband Erik's band (who with two drummers are really awesome by the way, but I'm not biased or anything) and I'm stuck at work processing film. Oh, the injustice of it all. Following my own priorities this is a show that I should have taken the day off of work for, but sometimes you just can't have what you want. Granted, knowing I was going to miss Resolve in Richmond as well as From Ashes Rise, I went up to Philly to see both bands play with DSB and Caustic Christ, and that was the kind of amazing show that makes punk rock worth dedicating your life to. From Ashes Rise gets better every time I see them, even when you think that it isn't possible within such a short period of time. And Kylesa is one of the only bands that I think is a match for FAR. When I last saw them in the spring it was like one of those monumental experiences that even an atheist could call religious. So shit damn. I missed out and I will not live this down in my own mind. But it's funny 'cause it gets me thinking about those people who couldn't tour and missed great shows years ago—now I find myself in the same place.

I know a lot of people take going to shows for granted. Or they just go for the fuck of it. I have plenty of friends who love punk rock and are dedicated and all, but if they miss a show or a band, life goes on for them. I have friends who don't understand my obsessive need to get to a show; who definitely don't understand the life or death consequences of it that I feel. I have never understood the people who can get so drunk they miss the band they came to see. Or those who can take it or leave it. For me, it's so much about the bands and the music and the energy and exchange that happens when a band plays live. I've learned the hard way to not believe someone when they say "Oh that house show, it's just a bunch of shitty bands playing." I always want to know what bands are playing, 'cause sometimes one of those "shitty bands" is actually one of my favorite bands, or someone I know. I always try to make a point to see each band, at least try to check them out, because I think it is important. I am driven with this need to know and experience live bands. I mean, not *every* live band that plays in a bar or shitty rock club. I'm talking punk bands here. It is certainly not "just about the music"—that's the thing with punk rock; it's about so much more than just the music. It's about a sense of community, an exchange of ideas, and sometimes when things really fall into place it feels like a family reunion, or it just feels "right." I've often been to equate the experience of a good show with giving me a sense of purpose, or with making life worth living, or validating everything that I do. I know a lot of people get burned out, and a lot of people get tried of so many "shitty bands." Numerous people would assume that after eight years of weekly Saturday matinees, I'd get tired of checking out every single band and every single show. But that has not happened, and seeking out those shows and bands continues to be the fuel for my fire. I find myself simply bummed on all that I miss out on. *I missed From Ashes Rise and Kylesa and Resolve when they played only a few blocks away from me*—talk about a stabbing feeling in the heart.

Long live the punks. Or as DSB would say, "Radical Punks Never Die."

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They're Back!

Anyone that's been following my reviews knows that THE FIRST STEP has been one of my favorite bands since I first heard their demo in 2001. From their records to their powerful live performances, everything about this band reminded me of why I got into hardcore in the first place. Blending the musical intensity of early YOUTH OF TODAY with the lyrical sincerity of INSTED, these North Carolina natives created a perfect vehicle to spread their message of non-violence and vegetarianism (topics all too quickly forgotten in recent years).

So you can understand that I was pretty bummed out when I found out that they were breaking up after only being around for two years. According to the band, they still believed in the music and the message, but things outside the band (i.e. moving to different cities, getting real jobs) started to distort their view on the whole experience. Well, I am happy to announce that THE FIRST STEP is back together and playing a string of shows starting at the beginning of January. Contrary to rumors, these are not "reunion shows." THE FIRST STEP are back as a band, and according to the vocalist Steve, they have a full length's worth of material already written. See www.livewire-records.com for more info. With all the great hardcore bands breaking up lately, this news comes as a breath of fresh air. I have no doubt that THE FIRST STEP will once again be headed back out to California eventually. For all those who skipped out on this band the first time around, you have now been granted a second chance. Don't fuck it up.

This Record Was Recorded in 3-B!
3 Beers and It Sounds Good, eh?

This title would in *no way* apply to the new GO IT ALONE 7" out on Straight On Records. I apologize, but my limited knowledge of Canadian culture has compelled me to paraphrase quotes from bad Rick Moranis movies centered around beer. Plus, I needed a good segue, since these dudes are from Canada. Seriously, though, this record is great. My drummer has been hyping these Canucks since he got their demo, and now I can see why. *Vancouver Gold* hits you over the head with a skillet filled with four fierce hardcore jams that don't let up from start to finish. Think early AMERICAN NIGHTMARE, when they were still edge, or later COUNT ME OUT. This record was definitely the surprise sleeper of this month's column. This band can no longer be ignored with a release like this. Check out www.straightonrecords.com and get into it, you hoser. See, there I go again…

Locals Only!

I am usually 100% opposed to bands wearing sandals on stage, let alone going barefoot (a very disturbing trend in the early 90s). But when paired with a full-on wet suit and/or board shorts on stage, open-toed shoes just seem like a necessary accessory. Especially when you're the surf-themed hardcore band from Hermosa Beach called SHORE BREAK. After getting their demo about a month ago, I was lucky enough to get a chance to check out these guys live down in the Slow Death at the Che Café. They had a real surfboard hanging with the band's logo on it and a big shark bite torn out of it. They played songs off the demo, like "Solo Session," which is about being left behind by your friends. Sure, it's a generic topic in the world of hardcore, but with SHORE BREAK you get a new twist: "How many times have we done this before, you turn around and paddle into shore. And I am left here swimming all alone. Alone!" The demo even includes a small picture insert of the Hermosa Beach pier, titled "Hermosa Beach Winter Swell Goin' Off!" Fun demo = fun band. Email SHORE BREAK at Sbdudes@yahoo.com for more info.

LIGHTS OUT - Two Song Promo Cassette

Youngblood Record's latest gives us a preview of what's to come for their new 7" slated for early 2004. I am simply amazed at the fact that four out of the five members in this San Francisco band are still in high school. How they can write songs of this caliber is beyond me. If you have the demo, then expect the same sound with better production and better all around songwriting. For those of you who don't have the demo, then think of a more modern youth crew sound along the lines of CARRY ON and RIGHT BRIGADE. This tape includes the two songs "Suck This Dry" (the unofficial SF hardcore theme song), and "In Denial." Don't be another numberrrrr, and pick this up. Check these guys out at www.blacksummer.com/lightsout or go to www.youngblood-records.com.

RN'R / SUICIDE FILE - Split

The record that I thought would never come out some how found its way to the Che Café a few weeks ago. This is a posthumous release for the SUICIDE FILE. It's been more than a year since Championship Vinyl starting taking pre-orders for this, yet somehow it found the light of day. With one of the best full lengths to come out in this past year, the SUICIDE FILE side of this record does not disappoint. Two rocking, mid-paced hardcore songs with more technical drumming than you can shake two drumsticks at. The standout song on here is definitely "Achtung! Landmine!" which is so good that it should have been on the LP. RN'R's side is OK. One original, one SAMHAIN cover. Imagine a screamier, less proficient version of the SUICIDE FILE. I could it take or leave it. Definitely pick this up for the SUICIDE FILE side.

Endnotes;
Listen to Swiz.
Trade me an old HARD STANCE shirt.
Please add "the cassette tape" to the list of images that you SHOULD NOT put on your band's record layout, website, t-shirt, etc. Waifish girls and blood-splattered anything should already be on this list.
Send demos and colored vinyl releases to: Carl Cordova, 746 Baker Street, SF, CA 94115 or you can email me at ih8thekids@hotmail.com.

CrimethInc. Workers' Collective Bullet-in

Welcome once again, steadfast enthusiasts of *MRR*, to another column in our series of recipes for disaster, soon to be consolidated into our forthcoming anarchist cookbook. The cookbook will be out soon, but in the meantime you can get the new issue of our anarchist / liberation-of-daily-life free tabloid *Harbinger* by writing us at: CrimethInc. Liberation Army, PO Box 2133, Greensboro, NC 27402 USA (www.crimethinc.com). Ask for bulk copies to give out if you want them.

Now on to this month's recipe:

How to Become a Professor Without a Degree
by *The Fuse Is Lit Collective*

Ingredients:
A University, Community College, or other institution of "higher" education
A few interesting / intelligent companions

Optional:
An interesting video
"Educational" packets
Pamphlets
Zines
Posters
Other propaganda

Overview:
We stumbled onto this recipe quite accidentally several weeks ago. Essentially this recipe calls for one (or preferably, a group) to assume the role of professor in a university class. The principles at work here are these: Traditional methods of propaganda distribution and subversion often find themselves confined to the leftist, activist, punk rock, or hip hop ideological ghettoes. Students—as our studies have shown—are unusually likely to pick up and *read* (!) subversive propaganda and ideas if they believe it is coming from the professor of one of their classes or someone the professor has authorized to conduct class.

Directions:
1. Procure a Classroom:

This is the most difficult step in this recipe, but here are some tips that will get you in front of a class in no time! First, try this recipe on the first day of classes at a university; no one in the class will know what the prof looks like, so you can pull this off without even making up a bullshit excuse as to why you're there. Second, at most universities (or, at least at the one in my town) if a professor gets sick or is otherwise absent unexpectedly, an official notice will be placed on the door of that classroom. So it is possible to walk around a university, locate one of these

notices and remove it. The notification should include at least the class section number, and probably the time the class is schedules to take place—if the time is not included, check the university's class listing; this can usually be found in the library, bookstore, or online. Come back at the assigned time, tell everyone that you're filling in for the professor, and do your worst. Another way to weasel your way into a professorship—this is the method we used—is to become friends with some profs at the local university. Professor friends are likely to call on you to conduct their class in their absence. Usually they'll ask you to do some menial task such as showing a bore-you-to-tears movie or pass out a syllabus or something, but hey, they're not going to be there! This technique a bit more time-consuming, but in a college town, professors are strong allies to have. The third and least recommended option (read "only for boring reformist pricks") is to go through something like 20+ years of school and actually get *hired* as a professor.

2. Oh Shit, I'm Standing in Front of 150 Voracious College Kids, Now What?!

First, imagine they're all naked. Second, calm down—students, like bears, lions, and other wild mammals, are more afraid of you than you are of them—honest!

Seriously though, this is where the fun begins. From here your imagination is the limit. You (and your friends) could give a lecture on armed guerilla struggles against Francoist Spain after the civil war, or you could give a skillshare on graffiti techniques. You could give a workshop on gender subversion, or pass out instruments and have a jam session. Whatever you do, though, we highly recommend that you have some radical literature on hand, because they *will* pick it up and read it. Second, and most importantly, in class discussion, don't shoot down *everything* students bring up that you don't agree with—even if you disagree with it very strongly. What we found is that this will polarize the class against you, people will stop listening, and discussion will cease. Instead, initially pretend to agree to some of these things, then later come back to these things and show why they are wrong but don't mention the original comment. Remember, the student prides herself on her ego; if you can keep hers up and still make your point, everyone wins.

What We Did:

At the beginning of the semester, a socialist professor of political science (the sole representative of "radicalism" at the university here) whom we had befriended in the last few years gave us a call. He told us that he was in France and wouldn't be back for the first two week of class. He asked if we would handle his classes for the time that he was gone and hand out syllabi. We agreed and it was on. Instantly we had three classes, six class periods, and something like 400 students to subvert.

None of us knew exactly what we were going to do, except that simply passing out the syllabus wouldn't suffice. We had nebulous notions of distributing propaganda through the classes, so we pulled out all our pamphlets, zines, posters, and went about producing a "reader" (teachers often pass these out, they usually consist of photocopied packets containing excerpts from boring-as-hell intellectuals). Our reader was a wonderful thirty-six-page packet consisting of excerpts from *Fighting for our Lives*, *Days of War Nights of Love*, Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, the Situationist pamphlet *On the Poverty of Student Life*, etc. This packet was hurriedly compiled in the hours leading up to our first class. Over a hundred were produced and distributed during our little experiment, and they seemed to go over very well with the audience.

The first few classes we taught were somewhat sketchy; our propaganda distribution went very well, but our lesson plan was—well, almost non-existent. It all came together in our fourth class, though. This was a three-hour long evening GE Intro to Civics class hosting 150 students (many of whom were freshmen), so we knew we could prepare a lot of material. The original plan called for one of our number (we'll call him Ted) to give a lecture on connections between the CIA, drug importing, and the Bush family, then to show the video *Breaking the Spell*, and to end with a discussion session. As the class started, it occurred to us that the VCRs and projectors were all either locked or required a code. This problem was easily solved when we realized that there was a big sticker on the phone reading "call x8105 for assistance with the multimedia devices." So, we called.

Us: "Uh, We're filling in for our professor tonight, and he asked us to show a video, but we don't have the keys, can you come unlock it?"

Tech Guy: "OK, do you have the code for the control box?"

Us: "Uh, no."

Him: "Argh, damn professor didn't prepare you at all… I'll be right over."

Within ten minutes the multimedia problems were solved.

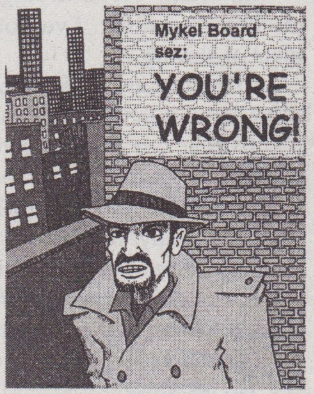
As it turned out, Ted was late, so we showed the video first. Now, when I say this what I mean is: we walked into the room without saying a word to the class, put in the video, and played it. For those who have not seen *Breaking the Spell*, it should be said that it is a militant anarchist account of the Seattle WTO protests. Within about five minutes, cops were cracking skulls and anarchists were breaking windows on screen, and in the classroom there were about 100 unsuspecting students with their jaws on the floor. The gasps heard through the next hour as protesters were viciously beat on screen made it clear to me that we were getting our point across.

The movie ended and the class seemed in shock. Ted had arrived by this point and promptly assumed his very natural role of discussion moderator and social lubricant. He told the class that anyone who wanted to leave should (a *very* smart thing to do) and some did, but many stayed. Then we asked the class what they thought of the movie. Then someone asked "what was the point of showing the movie?" I was about to respond with some sort of polarizing and cliché rant about the inherent violence of capitalist systems and the need to dissassemble them when Ted saved me from myself. "Why do you think we showed it?" he responded. This sparked an hour and a half of some of the best classroom discussion I had ever been privy to.

It should be mentioned here that the success of this discussion had a great deal to do with the dynamics of the group we had "teaching" the class that night. There were four of us there that evening. One of our number sat in the audience and acted in a capacity that we hoped would convince some students that they too were perfectly capable of being radical. Two of us are kind of scary-looking, fuck-shit-up no-compromise kind of anarchists. Ted, on the other hand, looks almost like a college student himself, and—while harboring many of the same ideas as us—presents them in a much subtler more pacifistic manner. He also works in a café, where he talks and talks and talks to all kinds of people with all kinds of political ideologies, so he is quite a bit better than the rest of us at getting his point across in a sugar-coated kind of way. Discussion often turned out like this: one of our more militant comrades would present a polar-

izing radical opinion in some scary militant fashion. The students would gasp and be like "No! Never! I'll never believe you, you dirty violent criminals!" Then Ted would jump in and be like "Well, I wouldn't really advocate that exactly, but they *are* right…" and then he'd explain it more thoroughly in a manner more familiar to the students. This allowed us to present views that were a world away from the views that the students held, but in a way that bridged the gap so that they could see where we were coming from—and where we are going!

The class ended with Ted showing a video about the US government's complicity in the September 11th terrorist attacks. Some left gritting their teeth, but all were contemplative, and even our most ardent ideological foes stopped after class to congratulate us on "the most interesting class they'd ever had." Oh yeah, and they took all our pamphlets.



One should not increase, beyond what is necessary, the number of entities required to explain anything.
—William of Occam

There's a scientific principle called Occam's Razor. It says that when a phenomenon has multiple explanations, you need to *shave off* the complicated reasons until only the simplest remains. When choosing among various causes, choose the simplest.

Example: I roll a pair of dice 100 times. Every time they come up seven. I could say that the cause was a coincidental confluence of forces that affected the dice so that on each throw, the dice showed seven. A particular breeze, coupled with certain corner wear, and the randomness of chance, would allow for that explanation. One hundred separate events with one hundred causes.

Or, I could say that the dice were loaded, weighted to always come up seven. One explanation for all 100 events. According to Occam's Razor, the second reason is the more likely correct one.

Life is like rolling dice. Look at yours. Is it sometimes sublime and sometimes hell, like a random throw of the bones? Or is it mostly misery with occasional moments of joy, like drops of honey in a pool of vomit? Are you mostly unhappy? Does joy come rarely—a tantalizing tease—then disappear immediately?

If the dice were fair, you'd find as much money as you lost. You'd be sexually satisfied as often as you're not. You'd feel like dancing as often as you feel like putting your fist through the wall. You'd want to kiss the stranger in line in front of you as often as you want to kill her. If that's the case, then immediately turn to the ads in this zine. This column is not for you. If it's not the case, then Occam's Razor says the dice are loaded. That's the point of this column.

World Series, game six tonight. A friend of my cousin's visiting this week. Actually, a distant relative—too distant to be incest. She's got red hair, a wicked sense of humor, and a female friend who's got her own boyfriend. Just right for me: keep drinking, toast to the Yankees win, then I hit her:

"It's too late to go all the way back to Brooklyn tonight," I'll say. "Why don't you stay at my place."

She's a bit late ringing my doorbell, but that's OK. She's a crip—some sort of stroke has her walking with a cane. It's fine by me. Dad's a crip. He lost an arm in WWII. Now he's confined to a wheelchair by diabetes. Mom's a crip. She's wheelchair-bound from asthma and Alzheimer's. I've had a blind girlfriend. I love crips. I'm convinced they're the strongest people this side of Mongolia. Oh yeah!

The Marlins are up three games to two. If the Yanks don't win tonight there's no coming back. But we have faith. We know how G-d felt about The Red Sox. Considering the way Florida behaved during the last presidential election, I expect she'll feel the same way about The Marlins.

We get to the bar in the middle of the second inning. The projection TV shows a nothing-to-nothing score. With Andy Pettitte on the mound, that's good.

[Note: I LOVE people whose names make a complete sentence. You can test 'em by asking a question. For example, Q. What does William do in the ground every day? A. William Burroughs. It's a sentence.

Andy is another one. (His last name is pronounced PED-DIT.) Q. Andy saw a little dog this morning. What did he do? A. Andy Pettitte.]

We sit at the bar, I buy the cute crip a beer.

It looks like Andy's in control. A couple men on base for The Fish, but they're erased with ease by Pettitte. The fourth inning is 1-2-3.

"It's gonna be a breeze," I tell her.

Now, there are two Marlins on base, but the next two go down like Twin Towers.

I gradually scoot my barstool over so my lower cheek is inches from the crip. Luis Castillo is up for The Marlins and he's just got his first strike.

"Another beer, for my friend," I shout to the bartender. "No, make that a tequila. Two."

Strike Two!

Yeah, it'll be a homerun for me tonight!

The next two pitches are balls. Then the game falls apart. A hit, driving in a run. No comeback for the Yanks. Another hit for The Fish. The Yanks strike out.

A pall comes over the room. It's as if each of us personally made that final strikeout. Quietly, people put on their coats and walk out.

"I guess I gotta go," says my crushed crush.

I'm in no fucking mood, and for me... that's serious.

"Yeah, well good night." I give her a peck on the cheek.

Little do I realize, that peck begins a trip to hell that ends with a face-to-face meeting with God.

The next morning I awaken with a Tequila and beer hangover. After groping to turn on the coffee maker, I hit the bathroom with a vengeance. Last night's Yankee loss splashes brown and loose into the toilet.

No time for more than the coffee though. It's Friday, the day I visit my parents in the oldfolks' home. I've got my car reserved at Hertz, but they won't wait forever. I've picked out a restaurant. A two hour's drive. It looks nice on the web. It'll let Mom and Dad enjoy a change of scenery.

It's raining. Not a shower, but the deadly drip of an all-day rain. I'm soaked by the time I get to the Hertz office.

After checking in, I go to the garage to get into my Ford Taurus. I back the car out of its stall. Or I try to back it out. The car drives forward.

I slam on the brakes and the horn starts beeping. BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! I push the *horn* button on the keychain. The horn does not stop.

The attendant, a dour-looking Negro in dreadlocks, glares at me with his arms folded. Like he's a pet owner whose little buddy just shat on the floor.

I turn off the engine and take the key out of the ignition. I point the plastic key fob toward the hood and press the horn button again. And again. Finally, the horn shuts off. It's then that I see it. Right under the grill in front of the car. The license plate... it's from **FLORIDA!!!**

Jeezus H Christ! I'm gonna have to drive through Manhattan in a car with Florida license plates? The day after the Yankees lose to the Marlins? New York drivers are already aggressive. I'll be a sitting target!

I restart the car and pull through the narrow garage exit. I'm on the street, in horrible traffic. Off to visit Mom and Dad. Before I reach the tunnel, two pedestrians give me the finger for my license plate.

On the way to the oldfolks' home, I stop at the local CVS to pick up a dozen packs of Depends.

Wheeling my packages from the drug store to the parked car, I press the TRUNK OPEN button on the key. The trunk opens. I load in the cases of Depends. When I slam the trunk shut, the horn goes off. BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

Fishing the key from my pocket, I press the red button. Nothing happens. I walk to the front of the car, aim it at the hood, press the button. Once. Twice. Finally, it stops.

Back in the car, I drive to the home. Dozens of elderly denizens lounge along the veranda. A woman with a walker toddles along the sidewalk from the front door to an outside bench. I get out and unload the Depends. Closing the trunk again sets off the horn.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

Every wrinkled face turns toward me, like a geriatric *Night of the Living Dead*. They're drawn to the noise. The woman with the walker suddenly shifts direction. Her flowered housecoat flutters as she approaches, a look of pure hatred on her face.

Struggling with the key, I finally get the sound to stop. An eternal few seconds later, the group of seniors returns to its leisure. After delivering the Depends, I help the folks into the car and head for the restaurant I picked out. It's far, but it should be a nice change for my homebound parents.

We drive for two hours. In the pouring rain. It's closing in on five. Mom and Dad need their medication. An inhaler for Mom, insulin for Dad. The oldfolks' home packed up what I need. Now I'm the doc. Nothing to it. When we get to the restaurant, I can take care of it all in 15 minutes.

The restaurant is closed. Renovations, they say.

I feel the blood pounding in my head. The frustration of the weekend, the license plate, the horn, the rain, compounded by a day of driving uselessly.

Okay. I know another place. It's not new, but it's not bad. Mostly seafood. Not far from the home. Back near where we started.

After struggling to get my parents from the car to their wheelchairs, I wheel them, one at a time, to the entrance to the second restaurant.

It's cold, raining like Noah's ready to sail. Guiding Mom's wheelchair with one hand, I pull on the handle to the restaurant door. It's locked.

I bang on it.

A rotund Italian-looking man pushes it open, looks at us, and shakes his head.

"I'm sorry," he says." We're having a private party. The restaurant is closed."

"Please!" I plead, "we'll sit in the back like we're not here. It's pouring outside. My parents are both in wheelchairs. We have no place to go."

It isn't much of an acting job to look absolutely pathetic. It works. The fat man shakes his head and holds the door open.

"Okay," he says. "If you don't mind sitting in the bar section, we can cook something up for you."

I wheel the folks into the bar. A waitress, suburban looking, with big hair and thick red lipstick, immediately comes to our table. We order and soon settle in.

As we eat, the party in the other room grows louder. They pay no attention to us, turning up the most God-awful music (think EAGLES and POLICE) to the most ear-splitting levels. A tall thin guy with slicked back hair dances wildly with every woman at the party.

So what? We're drying out and being fed. Mom's got a chicken something. I've got the seafood special. Dad's got a plate of shrimp.

"Finally some luck!" I say. "It's been an awful weekend and being left out in the rain would've just topped it off."

During our normal conversational banter, Dad begins to cough.

"Dad? Are you all right?" I ask.

"Not really," he says.

His voice sounds like the day after a booze and cigarette binge. His skin darkens, turns bluish. Slowly, his eyes close. He slumps, falling to the right in his wheelchair.

"Dad?" I ask.

No response.

I stand quickly. Nearly knocking over the table, I run behind the wheelchair. I reach around it and Dad's bulk. I don't know this Heimlich stuff. I've only seen it on TV, but I try.

Making a fist with my right hand, I put it under his breastbone. It's hard to feel through the fat and soft muscle. Ah, there it is. I think.

I bring my left hand around to hold the right, and then push. Nothing. I push again. It doesn't feel like anything's happening.

I run to the waitress.

"Can I help you with something?" she says with a smile.

"Do you know the Heimlich maneuver?" I ask. "My father is choking."

The boss overhears us and moves close.

"I can't do it to a wheelchair," she whines. "I know how to do it, but I can't do it to a wheelchair."

"It's not a wheelchair," I yell at her. "It's my father!"

"Do what you can," says the boss. "I'll call 911."

The waitress reaches around Dad like I had done. She's a little thing. Skinnier than me. Her body shakes as she squeezes. Once. Twice. Three times.

Nothing.

Wait! There's a little squeak, like a whoopie cushion that isn't working right. Dad's not waking up, though.

The manager is on the phone. I hear him in the background.

"Is he breathing?" he shouts to me. "The police want to know if he's breathing."

"I don't know!" I yell back. "He's making a noise, but he's not waking up."

"He doesn't know," I hear the man say into the phone. "But I think you'd better hurry."

Before long, my peripheral vision catches a flashing light.

Then another. The door opens. In march three uniformed people, two men with mustaches and a woman without one. They wear blue uniforms with orange and blue vests, like traffic cops. On the front and back of the vests are the white letters: EMS.

The manager shows them to our table. The older man, with flecks of grey in his mustache, looks at my father. Then he speaks to the other two.

"We've got to get him out of that chair." He turns to me, "can you help us lift him out?"

Speechless, I shrug.

The younger man, spreads an orange plastic sheet on the floor.

The woman, about my height, with shoulder-length hair and a body from a dyke bar, grabs Dad's left shoulder and lifts. I crouch under the right shoulder putting both hands under Dad's too-dry armpit.

"One. Two Threeee!" counts the woman.

I lift with my legs, like the gym teacher told us. The two male cops are at Dad's legs. Together, the four of us lift him over the arms of the wheelchair. And lay him out face up on the orange sheet. He's not looking too good.

"Get the vacuum," says the cop. "I can hear some air. He's getting some air, but there's a blockage."

By this time a large crowd has gathered in the door between the party room and the formerly empty bar/lounge where we are. The party has stopped. A few people sit nervously at the tables inside. The rest are in the doorway.

"Give me the suction," says the older cop.

He takes a machine that looks like a jar with a hose attached. At the end of the hose is a clear plastic tube with a slight bend in it.

The young cop squeezes Dad's jaw, like you squeeze the jaws of a dog to get it to take a pill. He reaches in, pulls out Dad's dentures and hands them to me. I wrap them in a cloth napkin and put them in my shirt pocket.

The woman cop flips a switch on the suction machine. It makes a whirring noise, like a mini-vacuum cleaner. She hands the clear plastic piece to the older man who puts it down Dad's throat.

"Got it!" says the older man, extracting a shrimp-shaped piece of meat from Dad's mouth.

"Let's check the vitals," he says. "Give me a scissors."

The younger man fishes through a black bag until he finds a pair of surgical scissors. Now they're cutting Dad's shirt. Right up the front. Snip. Snip. Snip.

Tearing the last few threads away, the cops expose his old man's chest with breasts hanging over his lower ribs.

They glue some electrodes here and there and attach wires. The other ends of the wires are plugged into a small electronic notebook, like the kind the UPS guy uses to record his deliveries.

The woman hands me his glasses.

"He can't see without them," I tell her. "He has cataract surgery. No lenses. He needs them."

The older cop looks up at me.

"Glasses are the least of his problems," he says.

By this time, no one is left at the party room tables. They've either left, or stand huddled in the doorway, watching. The tall thin guy stands in back, his face white.

Dad is on the stretcher.

"Where's Fred? Where's Fred?" asks my mother, not understanding what's going on.

"They're taking him to the hospital," I explain as they carry him out to the waiting ambulance.

I wheel mom through the restaurant, first stopping to pay for the dinner. The owner brushes off my attempt.

"Just make sure he's OK," he says. "Call me as soon as things settle."

He hands me his card.

I thank him and wheel mom out into the still pouring rain to the car.

"Where's Fred? Where's Fred?" she asks.

I lift her into the back seat. Then close the door. I run around the other side and put her wheelchair next to her. Then, I go back for Dad's wheelchair, and put it into the trunk. The horn starts beeping.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

I push the red button. It doesn't stop. The slick-backed hair guy pokes his head out the door. I shrug a this-happens-all-the-time shrug and press the red button again. And again. Finally, the horn stops.

I get in the car and drive off.

"Where's Fred?" asks my mother.

Unloading my mother at the rest home, I hear something clink on the sidewalk—fallen from my pocket. It's Dad's teeth. Lost forever, bounced into some unknowable underbrush and never found.

I get mom inside and drive to the hospital. In the hospital parking lot, the horn goes off. BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

Now consider these two days: The lost World Series, the lost crippled girl, the Florida license plate, the horn that wouldn't stop, the closed restaurant, choking dad and the lost teeth.

Does that sound like simple happenstance? Does each incident have its own cause, independent of the others. Eight events with eight causes? Or are the dice loaded?

I'm shavin' with Occam's Razor on this one. One cause for the whole kit and caboodle. You can call it what you like. I've already got a name: GOD. The Hebrews spell it G-d because the name is too awesome (awful) to be completely spelled out. I met her in person...and she's a bitch.

God is that force, that evil power that fucks up my life—and your life. She's a huge sadistic woman who wants nothing better than to make you so miserable you'll throw yourself in front of a moving train... or take some chemical equivalent—like Zoloft or Prozac.

Wearing a black leather bikini, she wields a cat o'nine tails against your ass. Atheists? It's up to you. You figure a reason life is such a pile of shit. You figure why every human lives only to suffer and finally die. You give me an explanation that doesn't rest on a bunch of hocus pocus or impossible chance. Show me some logic that I can't slice to ribbons with Occam's Razor.

I'm not holding my breath waiting, though. I might choke.

ENDNOTES: [*Visitors to my website: mykelboard.com or subscribers (email to: god@mykelboard.com) will receive a few extra endnotes. There are just too many to keep up with.*]

-->*The US really is an Arab Republic dept:* Aside from the Arab or Jewish theocracies, the US is the most religious, and religiously influenced country in the world.

One thing that separated us from our bed-sheeted brethren was that we concentrated our religious censorship on religious or sexual issues. Except for evolution, science had its province. Religion had what was left over. No more.

We're now joining the jihad. *Censorship News* (www.ncac.org) reports that since Georgie Jr. took over, we're

now censoring science. That censorship includes environmental, drug advertising, abortion breast cancer risk (there isn't one), and much more. You can read the full report on science censorship at: http://www.house.gov/reform/min/politicsand-science. It's pretty scary.

-->*On the good front dept:* You already know that public libraries have been forced to put censoring equipment on their internet access. You may not know that they can unblock the entire filter if an "adult patron 17 and over so requests." Even if you don't want to visit www.cowrimming.com, I suggest you ask to have the thing unblocked. The more who ask, the more aware the libraries will be that this censorship should stop.

-->*More proof of G-d dept:* As far as I know, the only fanzine store in the world was *See Hear*. That's the 7th Street emporium run by the *Ted* often mentioned in these endnotes. If I ever published a book, I'd want to have my first reading there, sharing the locative spotlight with Legs McNeil and Irwin Chusid. If you don't know who they are, learn to read!

That won't happen now. Not that I'll ever get a book published, but even if I do, there'll be no *See Hear* to read it at. Finances, New York City rents, and GOD, closed the store. It's a sad day for all of us.

The closest remaining store I know is *Quimby's*, formerly Quimby's Queer Store, in Chicago. They have other stuff to pay the rent, but they're still zine friendly and all we've got.

If you know of another zine store please let me know at: god@mykelboard.com. If you've got a trust fund, let Ted know at seehearfan@aol.com. Then we can have SEE HEAR II and wait for God to fuck up something else.

-->*Remember that costumed kid you told to fuck off dept:* Kesha sent me an article about an Ann Arbor man who was arrested for throwing a pumpkin through a woman's window. He threw another at her front door, and wrecked her birdfeeder. Why? She refused candy to his 5-year-old trick-or-treating son.

-->*Oy vey dept:* So I get this ad in the mail: *Escape to the mountains... Live your lifestyle the way others dream of living. Build a log cabin or natural wood-sided home. Our enchanting forest awaits you.*

Ok, what's so bad about that? Living in the wild, communing with nature. Not so fast. This is a *private and exclusive GATED gay and lesbian community.*

A gated community... only homos allowed. And not just any homo, but EXCLUSIVE ones.

Yeah! Now that the Supreme Court said homos should be let out of jail, I guess it's time for them to build their own jails.

-->*I never thought of that dept:* Every once in a while you get a psychological enema that makes you completely evacuate your old thoughts and replace 'em. That recently happened to me.

Two months ago, *MRR* mentioned Edward Said. He's the recently deceased Palestinian scholar who had a one-nation solution to the mid-East problem.

I went to a roundtable based on a new book. The roundtable was called: IS ANTI-ZIONISM ANTI-SEMITIC? The book is *The Politics of Anti-semitism,* edited by Alexander Cockburn.

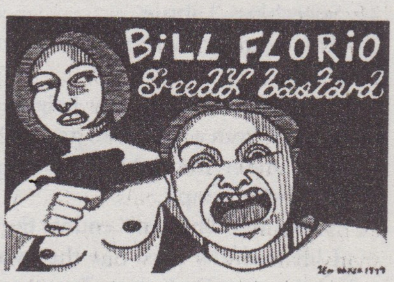
There were three speakers. The most amazing was ALISA KLEIN. She comes from a Zionist family, and served in the Israeli army. She's now anti-Zionist.

During her speech, she mentioned 11,000 Israeli soldiers who refuse to serve in the West Bank... like US anti-war deserters during Vietnam. Who knew?

Up until I heard her speech, I assumed that the best solution was two states. Israel for the Jews. Palestine for the Moslems. But she had a better perspective. Said's idea.

Two states would always be in conflict. Israel would be more powerful thanks to US foreign aid and military assistance. She proposed a one-state solution. That is, a non-religious state, with equality for all. It would be ruled democratically, not theocratically. Not a Muslim or a Jewish state. But a non-sectarian state, with, I guess, the "right of return" for everyone.

Wow! What an idea! Now, it's mine.



As most of you know, I live in New York. I live in the New York City part, not in like bumfuck Saratoga or something. And although I grew up right on the border of the city line, I've never considered myself anything but an urban kid. I'm sure a lot of people have talked about city kids vs. suburban kids vs. rural folk, but I'm gonna talk about people who are the most fucked up. People who grew up on an island.

OK—if you look at the world map, one out of the three huge suburbs of NYC is visible—it's called Long Island. Now, how many bands can you name from Long Island? How many artists or famous writers? Well unless Billy Crystal is your favorite actor, almost nothing. In fact, I think the most famous person to ever involve themselves with Long Island was a man named William Levitt. Levitt built the first modern suburb, Levittown. Basically, he took a bunch of potato fields, had someone design one oversized bungalow and built a thousand of them, all exactly alike, in rows and rows. It was relatively cheap and you could work in NYC.

Now, who moves into these beautified trailer parks? Well, postal workers, white flight, people who were shell-shocked in the war, and basically people who grew up in the city, but really could never hack it. Now this is the model for suburbs all over the country, but 50 years have passed, and when you add in the island nature (which includes a $15-20 train/toll fee to get to NYC where you may accidentally get hit with a little non-suburban culture) and the little such a community had to work with to start with. Not only does the island concentrate the bad suburban effect, but if you travel another 40 miles on this never-ending stretch of flat boring land where every single town on the Sunrise Highway has an almost exact repeating pattern: 7-11, Burger King, Taco Bell, McDonalds, and sign for a mall, it gets worse. Once you hit Suffolk County, the traffic on the Long Island Expressway prohibits most people from trying to commute, and you get the intensified rural community. All of a sudden you've gone from wanna-be guidos and "wiggers" (or I prefer the lesser know Wack-oon) to mulletwearingironmaidenTshirtclad70%oreganopotsmokingchevynovadrivingoutrighthicks of Suffolk County. Either way you look at it, if you grow up in the suburbs a lot of time you're stuck, but if you grow up in the suburb that happens to be on an island, you're screwed for life. I mean, read Wells Tipley's column—I think he makes my point for me hahahah.

Now, this is the problem. Usually people who are screwed for life make great punk rock. But, on an island, you have definite physical barriers to getting good punk rock to even know what it is. A 120-mile round trip to a miniature golf course is not something most bands think of sticking on a tour schedule, and

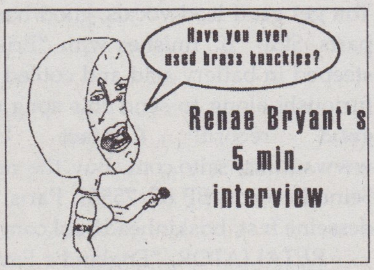
the few people who have tried to bring some good punk rock music and ethics to the community are usually overpowered by the inane nature of the crowd, if any, that will show up to a Long Island punk show. Well, either that or they read *Heartattack* and are too busy making babies with horrible names.

This whole column was inspired by this kid Charlie who books a bar called Saints N Sinners, which is sort of in the area in between rural and suburban. He starting going on and on about how all the Long Island bands he books are great, etc., etc. My point was that they're stuck; most of them can't get past the Newsdayesque monkeys on their backs. Most are happy only playing on the island—you have a good two-hour drive and a $40-$50 gas and toll expense to play a crummy show in NYC, never mind trekking to Philly or New Jersey, where it increases towards $100. What happens is a weird biosphere effect where everything is not in balance and you have strange spurts and stalls of bands that only go and see bands from the Island, not many bands will play out there and people have to be very choosy about which bands they'll be willing to spend $40-$50 to go see in downtown NYC. Sad to say, culturally, Yonkers is probably worse than any Long Island town as far as the moronic, sadistic nature of it's inhabitants, but I still could walk five blocks and take the 2 train for a buck and see CBGB matinees when I was·16.

The other experience I had with island punk was my week-long Puerto Rican tour as fill in bassist for NYC's noise-hardcore band MEDICINE MAN. Well, it seems like the only bands that had played Puerto Rico when I went there were SEPULTURA and AGNOSTIC FRONT. So, all the bands I saw there were just a lot of death metal with mosh parts, except the communist skinhead band that spoke very little English. One guy told me that the last show he'd seen as good as MEDICINE MAN was THE SCORPIONS, eight years before. While driving along the highway, watching the cycle of fast food franchises and strip malls, and trying not to think about how drunk the guy driving us was, I said to my pal Will Tarrant, hey, this looks like Long Island. Anyhow, when I finally get to play Sicily and Madagascar, I'll write part two of this column.

Yep, another column that builds up and abruptly ends. Screw ya all. Love, Bill bill@candids.com

By the way if anyone has funny home videos to trade me, let me know; I've been actively collecting funny shit for the past few years and I have amassed a large collection. Also THE SHEMPS are on tour and it will probably be almost over when you read this, but we're playing at Gilman with JEWDRIVER on January 17th, so I hope to see you all there.



I've been considering moving away from the suburbs where I live and teach to live in LA and commute (in the opposite direction of traffic) to work. Recently, I was driving to the small post office. I have had the post office box for almost ten years and the people who work there actually know my name (like on *Cheers*). As I was driving, I thought to myself that I would miss that kind of small town feeling. I reached the post office (which was closed), got out of my van, and fed some money into a machine for postage. I realized that I need my change purse and went back to my van to retrieve it.

I stood in the passenger side door of my van, hunting through my over stuffed purse. As I was looking for the change purse, an oversized truck flew into the empty parking lot and started honking at me to get out of the way. Well, I didn't move. I thought it was rude behavior. I finally found my change purse and then got out of the impatient driver's way. I went back to feeding my change into the machine. As I did so, I heard the woman say something to me as she walked out.

Now, I know that I should have ignored her, but sometimes I refuse to let people get away with stupid shit. So I replied, "What did you say to me?"

I followed her out of the post office. "You heard me," she retorted. "I said you really shouldn't be doing drugs in the parking lot of the Norco Post Office."

Being that I do not smoke, consume alcohol, or do drugs, I was extremely offended. "Lady, you don't even know me. I don't smoke, drink, or do drugs," I informed her.

"What else would you be doing with your head stuck in your van like that?" she asked me.

"Getting change," I pronounced as I waved my change purse in front of my face.

"Yeah, right," she replied.

"Look, I'm a fifth-grade teacher who teaches kids to not do drugs. I go out of my way to not be a hypocrite," I said.

"Sure you are. Anyway, I have a Masters Degree," she said.

"Big deal, I have a Master's Degree in Educational Administration," I said.

"No you don't," she informed me.

"You know what? You're a real judgmental bitch," I tell her. "You need to hop into your Norco truck, drive yourself to your church, and ask your god for help with the ability to stop judging."

"Well, look at yourself!" she continued on. "You're obscene, the way you're dressed, with all those tattoos!"

Now I was wearing a tank top and sweats because I was coming from the gym. Now I understood what was going on. This lady had constructed a profile of who I am based upon my tattoos.

Then I lowered myself to her level.

"What, are you just angry because you're topping a buck-sixty and I'm not? You're a real cunt!" I finished up.

That really got her mad, because then she ran behind my van and said, "Oh, you want some trouble? I'll give you some trouble," she stated as she memorized my license plate.

"Lady, both of my brothers are in law enforcement and I have already memorized your license plate," I informed her, as she got into her big Ford, Norco truck and finally drove away.

I went back into the post office to finish my transaction with the machine, but it had eaten my $3.25. Now I was really pissed. I got in my van. I was filled with hatred for all things Norco: the rednecks, the people with big trucks, the smell of cow poo, and most of all the ignorance. I felt like I was in fucking Alabama. So I drove my ass to the ghetto Corona post office where nobody knows my name and there is always a line. As I walked up, a thoughtful Hispanic woman opened the door for me. No one stared too long at me. Ten minutes away from Norco, people actually had some respect. The definition of respect I teach my students is "treating others the way you want to be treated." Shortly after the altercation, I ran into a teacher I had taught with last year—one who had been a mentor for the district and

had written a letter of recommendation for me for the Teacher of the Year "competition."

I asked her if she had a minute. She listened to my story in horror. Then she said, "You know why you're so upset…because you would never treat anyone like that." That was true. Then she told me that because she was obese people constantly said the most hurtful things to her, especially strangers. She recounted how one day a woman told her that there must be a really tiny woman inside of her body because she has such tiny feet. The commiseration made me feel better. I gained a little hatred for a small town that I originally moved to from Sacramento back in 1984, after my mom getting remarried. I despised the horse trails and cow-town bullshit then, and I still do. What is funny is that I'm not a teenager. I expected adults to show ignorance towards me as a teen, being that I was one of maybe ten punks in the whole city. As an adult I didn't really expect it. Fuck that lady.

Since we have returned from tour, things have been going well. Rodent Popsicle is going to put out our next record. We're really excited about becoming a part of a "family" of bands. I think this will help my wee bit On The Rag Records get better distribution too. We played an awesome venue in South Gate (which is a part of LA County) called the Allen Theatre. For anyone interested, the number for the venue is (323) 249-9775. The booker prefers phone calls, doesn't really do the whole email thing. There is an interesting phenomenon called www.punxfordean.org trying to mobilize punks to support Howard Dean. I'm sure there are ten things I'm forgetting to include in this column, but I'm in a hurry so I'll have to hit them the next time. You are always welcome to contact me at webmistress@ontherag.net or www.ontherag.net and PO Box 251, Norco, CA 92860-251. Thanks for reading.

Never Slow Down

Fuck yes! HAMMERLOCK has hit the streets with a kick-ass CD! The new CD on Steelcage is called *Compromise Is for Cowards*, and this fucker kicks ass! Travis, Liz, and Mike fuck your shit up right away with "Hate Is Not A Crime": "I Won't Swallow Your Happy Pill/ I Am Not Your Brother/ I Don't See Things Your Way / I'm a Fighter, Not A Lover"….Yes!

The second tune is about doing time in prison as a "Second Home." Song number three is rocking! This ballad is an American folk music gem! "Oldest Friend" enumerates the ways alcohol has helped Travis's vision. "You're like a long-lost brother I never lost / You're like a goddamn mother that leaves me paying the cost / And I know you'll be there when I reach the end / Alcohol you're my oldest friend / Lend me an ear and I'll take a shot / You're the kind of friend that'll take what I got / I push you away then you call my bluff / Keep reminding me that I ain't so tough / That warm feeling inside that I can't refuse / You're a friend to all that know how to lose / So I'll lie and say that I don't want you here / I'll lie and say that it's my last beer / Take that last swig and send you on your way / Only to see you come back the next day."

"California Highway" is a hard-driving anthem for people who make their living behind the wheel. The rocking anthem comes complete with honky tonk piano. "Never Slow Down" is a slower melodic love song. "40 Pounds" is a dangerous slide number with shouted lyrics about Humboldt Gold!

"Rollin' Out of Reno" celebrates the gambler's fever and the roller coaster ride of winning and losing. "Looking for Cans to Buy a Cold One" is a country number about the pride of a man who takes care of his family first and his hard drinking habits second. "Government Worker" is a vicious indictment of the lazy bums that feed off our tax money—fucking parasites! Check out the lyrics: "Our kids are taught by idiots and the highways sure ain't paved / They just went ahead and pissed away all the money we gave / We pay their goddamn salary and we don't have a choice / If the government signs your paycheck listen to the hate that's in my voice / Get off your ass government worker / You're just a burden bureaucrat man / Get off your ass government worker / You'll be the downfall of this land / I wish they'd just go on welfare then we could afford their pay / It don't mean you're worth a damn just cause you go to work each day / They think they're entitled to a job just sitting on their can / Why don't they just get off the dole and learn to be a man." Fucking great!

"Mickey Free" is a western saga about a "half-Irish, half-Mexican, whole son of a bitch riding on with Horn to avenge his enemy." You also get great cover songs "Poncho and Lefty" by TOWNES VAN ZANDT, " Can't You See" by Toy Caldwell and "Houston, Dallas, San Antone" by David Allan Coe. A fucking great CD! For your copy of *Compromise Is For Cowards* contact Steelcage Records, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125.

HAMMERLOCK celebrated the release of this beauty with a show featuring the JACK SAINTS at the BP Psychos' compound! Excellent!

Hell yeah! TKO Records has paired two of the best TEXAS TERRI with "Dirty Action" on side "A", the "sex side," and ANTiSEEN doing the RAM ONES nugget, "Beat on the Brat" on the "violence side." TEXAS TERRI has been garnering praise all over Europe and the United States and ANTiSEEN—what can you say—these guys have been playing scum-riddled RAMONES songs for twenty years. Write TKO Records, 3126 Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221, ww.tkorecords.com.

Fuck yes! The consistently great Bords De Seine record label in conjunction with Camdentown Records has a skinhead triumph for you! ULTIMO ASALTO from Spain play some excellent street rock and Oi! on this EP! From the first notes on the title track, "En Pie De Guerra," right through "Justica," side A is spirited Oi! music with power! Side "B" is more of the same, with the melodic "Barcelona" Oi! number leading off this side. You get gruff lead vocals, good harmonies, and stinging guitar parts. Side "B" finishes with "Erik" and again the vocals are steeped in battery acid and cooled with beer. The guitars chug furiously along to send this song over the top. This is a very good record! Contact ULTIMO ASALTO at www.ultimoasalto.com. Buy the new record through Bord De Seine Records, BP 85, 75561, Paris, CX 12, France, www.bordsdesseine.fr.st, bdskinhead@aol.com or Camdentown Records.

RETALIATOR, "England's Favourite Patriotic Alcoholics," are back with an EP called *The Sweeney*, on Camdentown Records. Gruff vocals and great guitar power this slab! The title cut, "The Sweeney" is littered with all the subjects that skinheads—nay, all men—pursue: drinking, fighting, and fucking. The English jargon may be difficult to interpret, but the theme is

clear! Side two of this rocking Oi! EP is about reclaiming St. George's Day as a holiday to celebrate British war victories. A damn strong record, which demands strong drink and a fist in the air! Contact Camdentown Records, PO Box 121, Girona, Spain, camdentwon@iespana.es.

WOLFBRIGADE has a howling new LP on Feral Ward Records called *In Darkness You Feel No Regrets*. This fucker just stomps on your neck with heavy tunes like 'The Awakening," "No Hearts Bleed," "Outlaw Vagabond," "Gunhead Battallion," "How Will You Find Your Peace," and the title cut, "In Darkness You Feel No Regrets." Read the words to this one: "A grave misconception brought you here / Your mind consumption taught to fear / A shallow pool of thought dictates the life you wrought / In darkness you feel no regrets / And in light you perish / One horizon sought / Repress their passion—yours is given up / A shallow pool of thought dictates the life you wrought / Bury your heart and be guided / For in darkness you feel no regrets / And in darkness you feel no regrets."

This is some heavy-duty punk bile for you knuckleheads—you get deep shouted vocals, grinding guitar onslaught and pummeling bass and drum dual attack—good shit!

INEPSY from Canada have a rough and ready LP full of gruesome punk for you! The *Rock N' Roll Babylon* LP has heavy-handed guitar riffs and great Lemmy Kilmister style vocals! The throbbing bass and drums are over-powering! These Montreal punks have some political lyrics to go with their MOTORHEAD riffage. Read the words to "Who's next?": "One more election / For a new life style / For the tyrant / A psycho war / Who will put humanity / At it's death sentence / Why the aftermath of progress? / They have the power to destroy / We have the will to make resistance / They built our future like a dumb / Survive / At the end, all we have is to survive / One more election / For a new life style / For the tyrant / A psycho war / Who will put humanity / At it's death sentence / Why the aftermath of progress?"

These raw metal-tinged punks drop the fucking "Overkill" bomb on your head! Good shit! Get your INEPSY *Rock N' Roll Babylon* LP by contacting www.feralward.com or Hardcore Holocaust.

Kick n' Punch Records from Copenhagen, Denmark has a great new LP for you by the band NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS. This fucker is packed with hard-nosed punk rock with a political bent. "Century of Warfare," "War Wreck,"" Ready to Kill" and "Eyes of War" are all anti-war songs. Check out some of the lyrics from these songs. "Century of Warfare": "I see dead faces rising from the trench / At the battlefield at Somme / I see mommies crying while their sons are dying / At the shattered place Verdun / I see the ice cold winters on the eastern front / I see blood and I see pain / I see millions of people lose their lives for nothing / I see the world go down the drain / As I wash myself in blood / From the innocent who died / I see the world as an unsafe place / There's nowhere to hide." "War Wreck": "The army trained him well / And now he's back in hell / The war ain't over yet / The war in his head / War wreck / Left to die but he survived / War wrecked / Casualties of a world gone blind / While we walk round in peace / He's still waiting for the war to cease / Walking down a street / Killing everyone he meets." "Eyes of War"; "He fought at the rim of hell / He killed again and again / He got the eyes of war / He felt the bullet go in / Cold lead piercing his skin / He got the eyes of war / And I looked into his eyes / Into a world of death / I took him by the hand / Still dripping with blood / And I followed him to hell."

The NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS LP presents a bleak but realistic outlook for the youth of the world with good melodic punk rock to communicate the futility. The vocals are strong, the guitars nice and crunchy. Get the NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS LP from Kick n' Punch Records, PO Box 578, 2200 Copenhagen N, Denmark; www.kicknpunch.com; kicknpunch@wildmail.com.

The VECTORS from Umea, Sweden have a brute of an LP out on Busted Heads Records. The VECTORS have been punking their way through Europe for damn near ten years. The *Still Ill* LP was recorded four years ago, but the labels involved failed to release it. The VECTORS have a circa 1977 punk sound influenced by the DAMNED, the SEX PISTOLS and the ANGRY SAMOANS. You get good snotty vocals and consistently entertaining guitars. The VECTORS slash through "Don't Need Nothing," "We Are the New Plague," "You're Dead," "Cut Off Your Ears," "Spit on You," "Everyone's Against Me," and "Kill." This is good fast punk rock! For your copy of *Still Ill* by the VECTORS contact Busted Heads Records, Space Mail Box 046, Renstiernasgatan 28, 116 31 Stockholm, Sweden; www.bustedheads.com.

Ugly Pop Records from Canada has a fine new LP by CAREER SUICIDE. You may have heard the *Sars* EP on Deranged Records—this is as good or better! The vocals are screamed, the guitars boil over the top! Every song bristles with punk anger! CAREER SUICIDE rip through songs like "Punitive Damage," "You Call This A Life," "Ruin and Wreck," "Closed Eyes," "Urban Slobs," "The Last Word" and much more. This is a ripping LP from CAREER SUICIDE! Contact Ugly Pop via the internet.

Till Next Month,
See you fucks at the bar!

SCHWARZENEGGER WINS RECALL, ANNOUNCES CLASIC HARDCORE REISSUES

No.

Sacramento (AP) – California's new governor-elect, action movie hero Arnold Schwarzenegger, held a press conference today to discuss the impending reissue of music from his little-known but widely influential early 1980s "Hardcore Punk" band "Positive Shock," of which he was the lead singer.

"People of Cah-lee-for-neeah, this is a very important time in history where many changes have happened, but it is easy to see how many ways things they are the same," Schwarzenegger said. "This time in which we live is not so different from the excellent time of 1983 to 1985 when Positive Shock was recording, and many of the sentiments are still relevant. I feel that this excellent hardcore music, so long out of print, needs to be available again."

Hardcore label Triumph! Records, known for releasing music from such well-known hardcore bands as One Wife Crew, will be pressing and distributing a Positive Shock CD retrospective to be titled *Kings Of Pump*. It will include all of 1985's *Back From Austria* LP (originally released on Los Angeles independent label SS-T Records) along with 1983's self-released *Reagan Is*

OK seven-inch single and 1984's *Hippie Terminator* EP (originally released on New Axis Records).

"We are very, very happy to be able to reissue these vital records," a Triumph! Records press release states. "Arnold and Positive Shock were the founders and driving force behind the distinctive Austro-Huntington Beach genre of hardcore in its heyday, and we feel these songs really need to be heard. Back then, as now, west coast hardcore was full of very negative, politically misguided bands and individuals burdened by self-loathing and a total lack of personal responsibility. During those times, a voice like Arnold's came ringing through the darkness, encouraging citizens of the hardcore world to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps and get pumped up for a brighter future. Now, with so many sourpusses and sore losers whining about the world situation and their alienation from society again, the kids in California need to have someone like Arnold to look up to as he does what he does best: produce blistering, positive hardcore music."

As a promotional measure for the reissue, Arnold has begun practicing Positive Shock songs (with members of the San Francisco Bay Area band "Benchpressed Logic" backing him up) in preparation for a California-wide tour scheduled for the week before his inauguration. The tour will culminate in a Positive Shock performance on the capitol steps in Sacramento immediately following his swearing in as governor. New York hardcore band "25 Ta Parole" will support, as Schwarzenegger feels that "They know how important it is to get tough on crime."

Shows for Positive Shock in the early years were largely uneventful compared to the violent, nihilistic spectacle of other hardcore luminaries of the day. The band would often attract gangs of skinheads who would do jumping jacks in the crowd and pass out pamphlets promoting physical fitness and encouraging support for then-president Ronald Reagan (Schwarzenegger was a big fan of the actor-turned-president and former drummer for the early-1960s surf rock combo the Del-Reagans). One of the few clashes between Positive Shock and their audience occurred during a show at the Hollywood punk club Hong Kong Café in 1985, when they played a slightly altered version of the Black Flag song "White Minority" that resulted in a bottle being thrown onstage, hitting Schwarzenegger in the head and temporarily rendering him unconscious. The incident ended quickly when several police officers attending the concert, who were big fans of the band and Schwarzenegger, came forward to help the singer back on his feet and escort him to safety from the incensed crowd. However, Schwarzenegger feels that the times have changed and hardcore has changed along with it.

"I believe this tour will be excellent in a way that our tours back in the day were not," Schwarzenegger said as he displayed a picture of himself doing a hardcore dance known as "The Windmill" at a sparsely attended show from 1984. Maria Shriver can be seen in the background, holding his bomber jacket. "Back then, we played with bands like Minor Threat and Negative Approach who were OK, but really needed to work out so they would not be so worried about being beat up in the pit all the time. I mean, all you need to do is get in better shape in order to kick ass and turn that frown upside down! The hardcore scene today is so much better organized that I just know all the shows will be great. Also, I have been told by my advisers that girls go to hardcore shows now, and Cah-lee-for-neeans know how much I love girls...with maximum and total respect, of course."

Governor-elect Schwarzenegger, with his busy schedule, will be flying to each show in his Learjet, while Benchpressed Logic and 25 Ta Parole take vans, but the bands don't seem to mind. "Whatever, as long as he doesn't try to force me to do push-ups or something. I already know he's not gonna pull any straight edge shit with us—that dude smokes a shit-ton of weed!" commented Mikey from Benchpressed Logic.

Schwarzenegger ended his press conference by flashing an unidentified hand "sign" and bounding up the steps of his Learjet, which had his campaign logo painted on the side altered to read to "Join Arnold In The Circle Pit." After an exhortation to "Stay True!" the singer/actor/governor-elect boarded the plane and flew to Los Angeles, where he was scheduled to meet with future State Controller Jack Grisham (of legendary hardcore band TSOL) about the "poseur problem."

••••

Well, this just sucks. I've failed. Ruined, beyond redemption. No matter how hard I try, I have gotten no headway. Numerous attempts have been made, all useless. The bottom line is simple: There is no way to write a funny, scathing satire about independent media consolidation, specifically the buyout of alternative newsweeklies by chains with an increasingly libertarian / conservative / Not In My Backyard bent. Even with such luminaries as Michael Lacey, head of New Times newspapers (owners of The SF Weekly and the East Bay Express in the Bay Area, Pitch Weekly in Kansas City, Westword in Denver, etc., etc.) spewing such entertaining quotes as "I'll run all these newspapers exactly the way I want, and anyone who doesn't like it can kiss my pink Irish ass" (from The Nation article "Chaining The Alternatives," 1998), it is completely impossible to find anything about this that's ripe for satire.

I decided to write on this topic for this month's column over three weeks ago, and despite loads of free time to ruminate on humorous scenarios, characters, parallels between "punk rock" businesses and the alternative newsweeklies, etc., it is now one day before deadline and I have had absolutely no luck in coming up with anything that would be entertaining to read. My obsession began with an exchange of letters, published in the New Times newspaper *The East Bay Express*, which involve a back and forth argument between me and my friend Kenneth, of the band Cope, involving the nasty tone of these corporate papers towards traditional SF Bay Area progressivism. Initially, I sniped at the *Express*, and Kenneth responded with an argument that all points of view can be valid and that all have a right to be heard. I responded with the contention that if money and media consolidation continued along the path they are currently on, there would be no progressive voice left in large scale media anywhere, and that my defensiveness of some of the last bastions of mass distributed, independent, often lefty sentiment (the alternative newsweeklies) was well-justified, given the encroaching tide of homogenizing conservatism. They didn't print the last letter, so I almost decided to just reprint the letters here verbatim, but *it's just not funny*. I'm a failure as a humorist. True, this is a difficult, esoteric subject to squeeze a laugh out of, but if ya can't get a laugh out of something, you at least need some command of pathos, and that's next to impossible to wrench from the grasp of such a dry subject as well. Fuck. At least I can tell a joke. You wanna hear a joke?

Q: What's the difference between Neil Armstrong and Michael Jackson?

A: Neil Armstrong walked on the moon and Michael Jackson fucks little boys.

That's the only joke I know, so I can only use this trump

card once. Yuk it up kids, I won't be here all week. Hopefully next month I won't end up obsessed with getting laughs out of PG&E's unconscionable inaction regarding environmental clean up at the Hunter's Point shipyard area in San Francisco or something, because you may be reading that joke again.

Doing a quick jump back to pathos (well, not mine, but belonging to people who I like very much, so perhaps it is my pathos in the sympathetic sense), Bottles and Skulls got their van and all their equipment stolen a couple of weeks ago. Here's the breakdown from their website:

"On the night of Nov. 19 the Bottles and Skulls band van (as well as all musical gear and merchandise within) was stolen in the Mission District in San Francisco. The very next day, however, an exciting car chase throughout the city took place (think 1968's *Bullitt*, only instead of Steve McQueen you get bass-player Hildo + one really stoned Brazilian pizza delivery driver + your standard goofy police squad, and instead of gut-wrenching hill-jumps you get 5:00 rush hour!) Anyhow, the van is eventually recovered along with many empty booze bottles and a really bad rap CD left behind from (uncaptured!) fleeing suspects. Unfortunately all gear, etc remains at large. Hopefully these things will begin to resurface in local pawn/music shops around the Bay Area. If you are in the Bay Area and hit these kinds of shops frequently, please check out descriptions of the band's gear [all online, with pictures, at www.bottlesandskulls.com], as there are some pretty recognizable traits about each item. Thanks so much for your help and a *huge* thanks to all the Bay Area bands who have already offered their assistance!"

As many of you have been, or are in a band, you know how much this sucks. There are a few benefits going on for Bottles and Skulls, one I believe will be on January 22nd at the Red Devil Lounge in SF (lineup as yet undetermined) and another will be on January 24th (venue yet to be determined in Oakland, with Fleshies and Federation X playing thus far). If you are in the Bay Area, come out to one and/or both of these—any support is much appreciated. You can check on the lineups/locations by calling (510) BAD-SMUT in the week before the shows, where an informational massage lies in wait to soothe your curiosity—er, message, not massage. An informational massage doesn't sound half bad, though.

—Johnny Mink, PO Box 3026, Oakland, CA 94609, johngeek@hotmail.com

By the time this issue of the magazine hits your local record mart or perzine super outlet, John Ashcroft has already come through your town on his whirlwind "charm offensive" tour, as the *NY Times* called it. His aim was to soften the way for Republican primaries, to defend his PATRIOT Act against those who've had the bad faith to publicly voice their opinion that government goons rifling through your belongings while you're at work without warrant or provocation is unconstitutional; at the same time, the tour also serves as an opportune stage from which to wield some of the considerable Republican charisma to stave off a bit of the public disillusionment regarding Iraq, problems within the FBI and CIA, the economy in general and gas prices in particular, and The War on Terror that has been showing in the polls since the end of the official "military engagement" in Iraq.

George Bush will probably not be convicted of the war crimes of which he is undoubtedly guilty (and by the way, to our readers in the Hague [besides Marcel], if he does actually get taken to trial, why not use the momentum to pursue every other living US president?), but I think we can all agree he's a grade A piece of shit, right? Is it just me getting older, or are you worried about our country, too? Like, not in the old, "fuck dude, cops suck" way, because yeah, I know; I'm more worried about the Jurassic manufacturing economy colliding with our stubborn, self-centered reactions to the realities of a globalism that will involve more than one superpower (it's inevitable: learn Chinese) and subsequent juvenile cries of protectionism. I mean really: We The People are not the same thing as The Government, but when everything fails we'll still be living here eating our neighbors' children and clothing our bodies in scavenged sheet metal.

YOU, PUNK ROCKER, MUST HAVE AN OPINION.

FURTHERMORE, YOU MUST RESIGN YOURSELF TO LIVING IN A REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND DEALING WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF PRETENDING THAT YOU DON'T COUNT ANYWAY BECAUSE CHANCES ARE YOU WERE NOT IN THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND, THE BLACK PANTHERS, ANY LOCAL GOVERNMENT, OR CRASS, IF YOU ARE READING THIS. That means that you probably won't be killed by the CIA before the next election and you'll look stupid if you didn't register to vote and Bush gets reelected by another margin comparable to the number of audience members at last week's NOFX show.

So speaking of voting, is it hard to be a Republican right now? I don't know; ask Chief Justice Roy Moore of the Supreme Court of Alabama, who's now looking for a new job as well as a new home for his statue of The Ten Commandments. Ask Thomas Friedman, the *New York Times* #1 soldier, tromping through the sands of Baghdad to bring you the most right wing, slug-on-the-arm take on the US's role in post-invasion Iraq that G.W. himself could hope for. Ask Donald Rumsfeld, who is now overseeing (from a distance) a greater body count in mid-August than that amassed during the duration of the "war." "Bring it on," indeed.

Or you could ask the 80,000 people that have lost their jobs per month of Bush's presidency. That's 27 million short conversations. You could ask the 20 percent of the American workforce employed in service industry jobs, most of whom earn less than $8.25 an hour. You could ask almost the entire state of Nebraska, emptying quicker than the Michael Jackson fan club due to NO JOBS BECAUSE WALMART AND POORLY PLANNED FACTORY FARM SUBSIDIES AND A DIMINISHING INDUSTRIAL SECTOR AND WHO WANTS TO LIVE IN NEBRASKA ANYWAY?!?

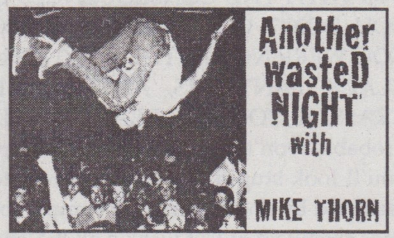
No matter how hard it may be for high-profile robber barons-cum-foreign policy gurus to maintain their game faces while the world community stirs against the US occupation of Iraq, it's nowhere near as hard as things will be if Grand Ayatollah Sheik Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah keeps his recent promise to unite Shiite protest in Iraq against the Imperialist Swine (that's us). So that's another big one to look forward to, as our tax dollars continue to ride off into the sunset to the sweet, sweet tune of 200 billion dollars over the next two years—all

money coming out of the public sector for the eventual profit of the private sector.

But still, for all the Keystone antics, for all the Who's on Third triplespeak echoing throughout every white marble building with a dress code stateside, it's still harder to be a vocal human of conscience. It's a panic game: even though they know they're wrong, and we know they're wrong, and now *they* know *we* know they're wrong, the sum is still zero. How many Pardon Me's can we expect of an administration that's been illegal from the onset? When G.W. lost by 500,000 votes but still contested the election, he was making a very clear statement about exactly how much he cared for the opinions of his constituency. That's the very scary part. What does it take? When are we doing anything but asking to speak to the manager? Who's *the guy?* The one with the buttons and the ink pens who makes the Big Decisions? If elections no longer work and public opinion doesn't sway the electorate, where can we find the *real* people in charge?

I don't know either, but you should still vote this time, jerky.

write, right? PO Box 28226, Providence, RI 02908



It's nearly midnight on Christ-mess, we go to print tomorrow after a week or so of rushing around putting the final pieces together, and writing this column is the last part I have to contribute. Today was like any other day for me, except nothing was open and I couldn't trek around the corner to buy coffee, as is my normal morning ritual. While most of the western Christian world was celebrating the birth of sweet Baby Jesus by opening box after box of fancily wrapped gifts, Clara, Jake, Donna, Dave, and myself ate snacks and ambitiously attempted to do an inventory on the *MRR* record archive. It's a long and arduous task—one that despite the early pipe-dream optimism towards it only taking a day or two, will more likely extend into being a month-long project. Truth be told I enjoy flipping through the records, examining each record sleeve; the artwork, the funny band names, the funnier band photos—just the sense of history and continuity that this little slivers of plastic convey. The snapshots into someone's life they provide, giving you a glimpse into the thoughts, passions, frustrations, and joys that provide the basis for the music and community many of us so fervently cling to, which when all is said in done is what tends to matter most. The friendships that we generate, the connections across nations—sometimes I feel like a broken record, having stated my sentiment on this more times than I really care to think about, though perhaps the reason that I feel the need to state it is my feeling that, as of late, this is dissolving away. That awareness that you don't need a booking agent, a manager, or a PR agent to be a band that can tour, put out records, and be successful. That sense of trust that you can travel to a city that is totally foreign to you and meet punks who you can stay with, that they're not going to attempt rob you blind in your sleep. What I really miss, however, is a feeling of collective anger and alienation. Really, is it just me, or does it really feel like much of the punk scene has gotten dumber, more apathetic, and less likely to speak up, especially in regards to issues of sexism, homophobia and racism? It's OK to rock the boat, really. It's OK to piss people off; you're a punk after all, right?

"I'm anti-sex, the way you treat sex…"
—The Electric Deads

I held my tongue about it, and mostly because I felt Arwen would (and has) handle(d) it better than, perhaps, I could, but let's talk Rich Mackin, shall we? First, let's discuss a few things; I'm a man, in case it wasn't obvious enough; many of you share this in common with me, and as men we have the liberty to choose if we want to deal with sexism or not. A woman doesn't have this choice. Don't even try to give me any sass about "reverse sexism" because you know in your heart and deep down in the recesses of your mind that is just utter bullshit. This is a patriarchal society and as such, it is you, the man, who has the power position. While you, as a man, can choose to ignore sexism, women must deal with the nature of patriarchy on a daily basis. You know it; I know it, so let's live up to what we claim for once.

So back to Mr. Mackin, I'm not here to make accusations of assault or general creepiness (though a note to you, sir—perhaps next time when you are with a female friend who has stated that she has no interest in humping you, touching naughty bits, etc., perhaps you would be best advised not to place your hand down her pants in her sleep, nor cop a unwanted feel of her breast, I mean, just a thought). What I do want to address is this dismissive and hyper-defensive attitude that pervades Rich's writing, as it is, all too often, the typical route that too many men and their male chums tend to head down. First off, admit when you fuck up. It's that simple. It doesn't make it right, it doesn't make everything better overnight, but admitting being in the wrong does perhaps get the ball rolling to begin the process of healing. And for fuck's sake, listen to what the women around you have to say—shut up for once, shut down your ego and put your dick back in your pants. You'd probably be amazed what you'll learn about you. I mean you probably like hearing about yourself anyway, so listen.

And men, you should and need to support the women around you, and not in a macho "he groped/made fucked up comments to/etc. one of *our women*, let's kick his ass" sort of manner. Instead, try this: when a woman makes accusations of assault, perhaps your first impulse shouldn't be to dismiss her story as being the fabrication of a man-hating, anti-sex, "feminazi." As an alternative, listen to what she has to say. Listening and paying attention to what is being actually being said goes a long way. Men, too often, have a tendency to try to speak for women and put words in their mouths, so just to clarify; not what you assume is being said, not what you think is being said, but what the woman is actually saying. I'm not claiming to be perfect, I'm not claiming that I've never done anything sexist in my life, all I'm really try to do is offer a little advice from one man to another.

Men seem to never talk about sexism, and how we perpetuate it, nor do we call each other on our shit in regards to it as much as we should. It's as I stated before, it's easy for us, as men—we don't have to, as it is not something that is shoved in our faces on a daily basis. I understand the desire to not rock the boat, but conversely we must consider the cost that our decision to maintain the status quo has on our female friends. Our unwillingness to speak up and support women—whether it's when they are abused, sexually harassed, raped, or otherwise

assaulted—only helps to perpetuate the cycle.

Just think about it.

Endnotes:
0) Needless to say, the role of abuser, creep, or otherwise assorted jackass is not exclusive to heterosexual relationships.
1) Music that inspires my life right now: ECONOCHRIST, NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS, STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, WORLD BURNS TO DEATH, and FUCKED UP.
2) Did you happen to catch the tale of Mr. Richard Humphreys, a 51-year-old truck driver who made a comment, which was overheard by a bartender, in regards to how President Bush should be set ablaze upon his visit (scheduled for the following day)? The bartender, being the good citizen that he is, turned him in, and now Mr. Humphreys is doing three years prison time. Ain't America great? Ari Fleischer said it before, but I'll repeat it here—some Americans need to be extremely cautious as to what they say. In light of this, I recommend reading Kafka's *The Trial*. War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is bliss, and Orwell was perhaps too right, albeit 20 years off.
3) On the outside I remain an cranky and angry young man, but it's all a facade. Really, deep down inside I remain an extremely approachable friendly person who welcomes your letters care of the *MRR* PO Box and emails via:
mikethorn@maximumrocknroll.com
It will take forever for me to write you back, and for that I will apologize in advance, but please don't let that dissuade you from writing.

UNDER the INFLUENCE

J. Heermann

BE PREPARED FOR ACCIDENTS... WITH ARWEN CURRY

Big news, at least around here: I will be stepping down as *MRR* coordinator in a few months. I'll still be a shitworker: write a column, do record and zine reviews, etc., but I'll be moving out of the house and out of the position of primary responsibility by the beginning of April.

I made this decision about three months ago, and told Mike and Clara back then, when I was sure. We needed a little time to scheme and regroup before letting the shitworkers, and finally you, our cherished punk-as-fuck readers, know—so sorry if it seems a little abrupt.

I'm sorry to report that there's no drama, though as I told the shitworkers, you are always welcome to make some up. The scales just finally tipped for me, after just about exactly five years of doing this, in the favor of another possible future. Sound reasonable?

We are looking for a new coordinator to take my place. Someone who is not only crazy (and pretty knowledgable) about punk rock 'n' roll, but who also is literate, responsible, strong-minded, organized, resourceful, and creative, among other things. Also, someone who respects and understands *Maximum*'s history, ethics, and attitude. A sense of humor is essential. We are especially hoping that women will apply, since the gender balance is important in the house and in the magazine, but everybody who thinks they want to/can do it should seriously consider it, and then drop us a line.

Mike and I will keep you posted about our progess in finding a new sucker. In the meantime, we've got a lot of work ahead of us.

Before Tim Yo died, in the interest of the magazine's survival, he composed a document called "How to Make MRR Work." That's been collecting dust for years now, as the process of making *MRR* work adapted itself to new circumstances and new personalities. It's time, now, for Mike and I to pull that old manuscript out and dust it off. We may even have to rewrite the whole thing. That shouldn't take us more than six months or so.

Anyway, it sounds like fun. I wasn't doing anything else anyway.

arwen@maximumrocknroll.com
I do another zine. You can order a copy of Ration #3 for $1 ppd.

Etcetera: I keep forgetting to introduce the "Peops" comic you may have noticed in the last few issues. We'll be running Fly's Peops as a regular feature, as you may have guessed. So enjoy!

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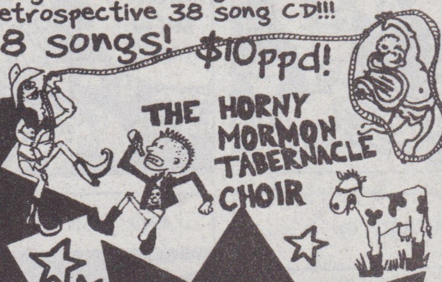

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MRR NEWS

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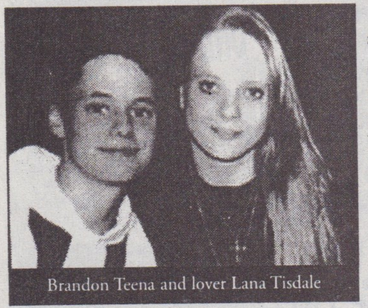
Feb. 2004
compiled by:
Arwen Curry

REMEMBERING BRANDON TEENA, TEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

On 26 December, 1993, a young transsexual was shot and stabbed to death in a crime which later became the subject of the Oscar-winning movie *Boys Don't Cry*. Ten years on, his family is still seeking justice, and dozens of transsexuals continue to be murdered every year.

The film told the true story of Brandon Teena, a girl from Nebraska who chose to live as a boy. Brandon, who was 21, and two other people, were shot and stabbed to death only days after she complained to the police about being raped.



Brandon Teena and lover Lana Tisdale

Two men, John Lotter and Marvin Nissen, were convicted of first-degree murder. Nissen struck a plea bargain and was jailed for life in exchange for testifying against Lotter, who was sentenced to death in 1996.

Nebraska is the only state in the United States which retains the electric chair, last used in 1997 for triple killer Robert Williams. Lotter's lawyers are still fighting to save his life.

But Brandon's mother JoAnn is campaigning for justice for her child, who was born Teena Brandon but flipped her names when she started living as a boy. JoAnn Brandon remains bitter about the way her daughter was treated after she made the rape complaint.

Brandon, 21, had lived as a boy for several years, strapping her breasts down, wearing men's clothes and padding her underwear with socks. She was also dating a woman, Lana Tisdale, who initially believed she was a boy but remained with her when she discovered the truth. Six days before she died, Brandon was attacked and raped by Lotter and Nissen, who had recently found out she was actually a girl. Brandon reported the attack to Richardson County Sheriff Charles Laux and identified Lotter and Nissen as the assailants. Mr Laux has been heavily criticised for not arresting the pair and for the way he acted during Brandon's interview. He ridiculed her sexuality and was later censured by Nebraska's Supreme Court for the "crude and dehumanising" way he went about interviewing her.

"Laux's conduct was extreme and outrageous, beyond all possible bounds of decency, and is to be regarded as atrocious and utterly intolerable in a civilised community," wrote Judge John Hendry.

Last year Mrs Brandon was awarded $7,000 for the emotional distress to Brandon before her death and $5,000 – less than the funeral expenses – for her own loss. Mrs Brandon lost an appeal to the Nebraska Supreme Court and said at the time: "I am very disappointed. I think my daughter's life was worth more than $5,000."

Gwen Smith, who runs a website called Remembering Our Dead which monitors violence against members of the transgender community, said there had been a gradual changing of attitudes in the US and added: "A lot of it stems back to the Brandon Teena case.

"It was very shocking and it was a wake-up call. After it happened the transgender community began to get together and start working on things."

She said violent antipathy towards transsexuals remained high in the US, especially in certain "hotspots" such as Washington DC and Texas.

Ms Smith told BBC News Online: "In the last calendar year there have been 39 transsexuals murdered worldwide, and all have contained an element of anti-transgender bias in them."

One of the most horrific cases was that of Gwen Araujo, a 17-year-old boy from Newark, California, who chose to live as a girl. He was beaten, raped and then murdered after several young men at a party discovered his true sexuality.

Ms Smith said: "There have been changes in Nebraska since Brandon was killed. It was something which shamed the community, a bit like the murder of [homosexual student] Matthew Shepard in Wyoming in 1998."

At Lotter's trial prosecutors said he was terrified of being jailed for the rape and decided to silence the only witness.

Lotter and Nissen tracked Brandon down to a remote farmhouse near Humboldt, Nebraska and killed her, a friend Lisa Lambert, 24, and another man, 22-year-old Phillip DeVine.

When they were arrested for the murder, Nissen offered to give evidence against Lotter in exchange for avoiding the death sentence. Lotter's attorney, Jerry Soucie, told BBC News Online: "The US has a system of plea bargaining, which is always a race to the district attorney's office and the guy who gets there second is dead."

Mr Soucie recently filed a petition with the US Supreme Court requesting the death sentence be set aside because the sentencing phase was undertaken by a judge rather than a jury.

Mr Soucie said there was no physical evidence linking his client to the murder scene: "It was circumstantial evidence based on the sexual assault a week before, which established motive, and several people saw them looking for Teena Brandon on the day of the homicide."

Mr Soucie said there had been a lot of embarrassment in Nebraska about the way the case was handled by Sheriff Laux.

"People were embarrassed that this crime happened in Nebraska and not Possum Shore, Mississippi. It made us look like a bunch of doofuses," he said.

Mr Laux was voted out of office shortly afterwards and now works as a prison guard.

Earlier this year the Nebraska Supreme Court rejected appeals by Lotter's lawyers, who claimed he was entitled to have a glove DNA tested. But Mr Soucie said: "I still think Mr Lotter has at least two or three years to fight on."

Gwen Smith said many US states had now introduced legislation to combat discrimination against transsexuals – the UK is set to introduce its own Gender Recognition Bill next year.

But, she said, "Changing people's attitudes is a slow process. It's an evolutionary process and it will take time."

TRANSSEXUAL MURDER CASES

Feb 1997: James/Robyn Brown, London, UK
Oct 1999: Sissy "Charles" Bolden, Savannah, Georgia
Jul 2000: Julia Carrizales, Webster, Texas
Oct 2002: Gwen Araujo, Newark, California
Jul 2003: Kendrick/Cinnamon Perry, Houston, Texas
Aug 2003: Emonie Spaulding, Washington DC
Oct 2003: Erika Johana, Rome, Italy

EVICTION OF SQUAT IN ST. PETERSBURG

On Friday, the 7th, November 2003, the squatted house in Petersburg was evicted. Early in the evening two policemen, a man and a woman, came up to the house. As we didn't open the door on repeatedly request, one of the policemen began smashing the windows with stones. Then we opened the door. Although we were prepared for the eviction (we had carried all valuable and not immediately necessary things away two days earlier), the time of the eviction was very bad for us. Out of twelve people who were in the house at the time of the eviction, seven were foreigners. There was a Finnish women's band, which arrived one day before, and two of the squatters who had lived in the house since the very beginning of the squat. Because of this, we decided not to take up a confrontation with the policemen, but to leave the house voluntarily.

The police told us to leave the house within 15 minutes and disconnected the electric heating. It was visible, that the heating was self-made, but the illegally connected electricity was not of any interest to the policemen. Meanwhile the squatters packed their stuff, and the policemen collected the passports of the Finnish band and told them to come to the next police station. There they returned the Finnish people their passports, without noting the personal data. The squatters were told to come round in the next days for the keys to carry away the rest of the stuff.

The behavior of the police is irrational. One the one hand they collected only some of the passports. Some of the squatters were allowed to leave without getting touched. In fact, the police lost the overview. Taking the Finnish people to the police station was nonsense, considering the fact that they didn't take their personal data. Why didn't they show any interest in the illegally connected electricity? Why did they evict only the politicized anarcho-punks and not the homeless people from the second floor? Why didn't they take the personal data of the squatters? The squatters confronted the police with the idea that they took bribes from the homeless people. Both the police and the homeless rejected this in the presence of each other. We will see if the policemen will, as they told us, evict the homeless in the next days, or if they won't touch them. We'll come back! We'll squat again – we don't give up.

Pekarnja
ancla2003@hotmail.com

WAS WILLIE HORTON GAY? WILL GEORGE W. BUSH BE THE HATE-HOMOSEXUALS CANDIDATE?

by Harvey Wasserman
Published by the Free Press (Columbus, OH)

Few Americans now remember that George W. Bush's father was elected president in 1988 in one of the most racist campaigns ever staged in the United States. Now W. seems poised to follow in those tainted footsteps.

But the "issue" this time won't be race, it'll be gay marriage.

Early in the 1988 campaign, then-Vice President George H.W. Bush trailed then-Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis by as much as 15 points in the mainstream polls. Bush was sunk in a scandal-ridden Reagan Administration whose trademark was Iran Contra, the bizarre scam in which the Reaganites had illegally sold arms to Iranian fanatics and slipped the profits to right-wing contra rebels trying to overthrow the duly elected Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Reagan also sold chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction to Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein. Reagan's envoy to Saddam was now-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

Reagan was always more popular with the media than with the general public. Constantly proclaiming support for a balanced budget amendment, Reagan left the largest deficits in US history (until the coming of George W. Bush).

Bush One's run against Dukakis was hampered by his aloof, upper-crust lack of charisma. Running mate Sen. Dan Quayle of Indiana was noted mainly for his deer-in-headlights demeanor. In a crucial televised debate, Quayle was utterly demolished by Dukakis's running mate, Texas Senator Lloyd Bentsen.

But the Bush-Quayle team had a trump card---racism. Lee Atwater, the Karl Rove of the day, was a hard-driving, below-the-belt dirty trickster. Atwater seized on Willie Horton, a black prisoner who'd been paroled from the Massachusetts penal system and then committed another crime.

Atwater filled the air waves with brutally racist black-and-white ads meant to make Horton and Dukakis seem blood-related. The poisonous stench helped send the Democrats into a tail spin. Atwater later developed a brain tumor, and repented what he had done.

Karl Rove may soon step into Atwater's shoes. Recent decisions by the Supreme Courts of the US and Massachusetts against anti-sodomy laws have thrown the Christian Coalition and its national network of right-wing churches into a self-righteous tizzy.

For Rove, gay marriage is the new Willie Horton, a wedge issue perfectly suited to fire up the corporate-funded right-wing church network while diverting public attention from an ailing economy and a failing war effort.

Ironically, Vice President Dick Cheney's daughter is a lesbian whose personal right he has defended. As documented in David Brock's BLINDED BY THE RIGHT, the GOP has been continually lit up by closeted gays sickened by its vicious homophobia.

Rove, in turn, has not hesitated to attack Brock and anyone else opposing the Republican juggernaut. Bush has already let it be known he's inclined to support a Constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, and the Foxist media is starting to treat it as a major issue.

As governor of Vermont, Howard Dean approved gay civil unions, somewhat different from gay marriage. But the Bush/Rove GOP is unlikely to make such fine distinctions, any more than Bush One belabored the legal intricacies of the Willie Horton parole. Nor will they refrain from smearing other Democrats, whatever their actual stance, with the nastiest possible slant on gay rights.

What Papa Bush and Lee Atwater did to promote racism in American presidential campaigns, George W. and Karl Rove are poised to do for homophobia.

HARVEY WASSERMAN is author of HARVEY WASSERMAN'S HISTORY OF THE US and co-author (with Bob Fitrakis) of GEORGE W. BUSH VS. THE SUPERPOWER OF PEACE (www.freepress.org)

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Rumsfeld Backed Saddam Even After Chemical Attacks

by Andrew Buncombe in Washington
Published by the Independent/UK

Fresh controversy about Donald Rumsfeld's personal dealings with Saddam Hussein was provoked yesterday by new documents that reveal he went to Iraq to show America's support for the regime despite its use of chemical weapons.

The formerly secret documents reveal the Defense Secretary traveled to Baghdad 20 years ago to assure Iraq that America's condemnation of its use of chemical weapons was made "strictly" in principle.

The criticism in no way changed Washington's wish to support Iraq in its war against Iran and "to improve bi-lateral relations ... at a pace of Iraq's choosing".

Earlier this year, Mr Rumsfeld and other members of the Bush administration regularly cited Saddam's willingness to use chemical weapons against his own people as evidence of the threat presented to the rest of the world.

Senior officials presented the attacks against the Kurds - particularly the notorious attack in Halabja in 1988 - as a justification for the invasion and the ousting of Saddam.

But the newly declassified documents reveal that 20 years ago America's position was different and that the administration of President Ronald Reagan was concerned about maintaining good relations with Iraq despite evidence of Saddam's "almost daily" use of chemical weapons against Iranian troops and Kurdish rebels.

In March 1984, under international pressure, America condemned Iraq's use of such chemical weapons. But realizing that Baghdad had been upset, Secretary of State George Schultz asked Mr Rumsfeld to travel to Iraq as a special envoy to meet Saddam's Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz, and smooth matters over.

In a briefing memo to Mr Rumsfeld, Mr Shultz wrote that he had met Iraqi officials in Washington to stress that America's interests remained "in (1) preventing an Iranian victory and (2) continuing to improve bilateral relations with Iraq".

The memo adds: "This message bears reinforcing during your discussions."

Exactly what Mr Rumsfeld, who at the time did not hold government office, told Mr Aziz on 26 March 1984, remains unclear and minutes from the meeting remain classified. No one from Mr Rumsfeld's office was available to comment yesterday.

It was not Mr Rumsfeld's first visit to Iraq. Four months earlier, in December 1983, he had visited Saddam and was photographed shaking hands with the dictator. When news of this visit was revealed last year, Mr Rumsfeld claimed he had "cautioned" Saddam to stop using chemical weapons.

When documents about the meeting disclosed he had said no such thing, a spokesman for Mr Rumsfeld said he had raised the issue with Mr Aziz.

America's relationship with Iraq at a time when Saddam was using chemical weapons is well-documented but rarely reported.

During the war with Iran, America provided combat assistance to Iraq that included intelligence on Iranian deployments and bomb-damage assessments. In 1987-88 American warships destroyed Iranian oil platforms in the Gulf and broke the blockade of Iraqi shipping lanes.

Tom Blanton, the director of the National Security Archive, a non-profit group that obtained the documents, told *The New York Times*: "Saddam had chemical weapons in the 1980s and it didn't make any difference to US policy. The embrace of Saddam and what it emboldened him to do should caution us as Americans that we have to look closely at all our murky alliances."

Last night, Danny Muller, a spokesman for the anti-war group Voices in the Wilderness, said the documents revealed America's "blatant hypocrisy". He added: "This is not an isolated event. Continuing administrations have said 'we will do business'. I am surprised that Donald Rumsfeld does not resign right now."

A WRONG APPROACH TO AID TO LATIN AMERICA

by César Chelala
Published by the International Herald Tribune

In the last few years, US military aid to Latin America has increased substantially, adding little to solve the pressing social problems besieging the region. To reverse this trend in favor of social and economic programs would benefit not only Latin America but also the US, since the Latin American region is one of the US most important trading partners.

According to several recent reports, US military aid to Latin America has more than tripled in the last five years. At the same time, Latin American soldiers and police were among those receiving more training than those in any other region - 13,000 Latin American trained personnel out of a total 34,000 world-wide. It is estimated that 40 percent of US-funded military assistance to non-NATO countries goes to Latin America. Colombia has been the largest recipient of US training in 2001 and 2002, despite the fact that the US State Department, the U.N. and several international human rights organisations have documented serious human rights abuses by the Colombian military.

A report entitled "Paint by Numbers: Trends in US Military Programs with Latin America & challenges to oversight" a joint publication of three different organizations, states that US military aid to Latin America now almost equals the amount of money that Washington assigns to social and economic programs. The report charges that although the sharp increase in military aid to Latin America started under president Clinton, it became more pronounced under the present US administration. By strengthening the military rather than civilian institutions, those funds actually hinder the development of democratic structures and regional stability.

This situation is happening at a time when many countries in the region are going through serious economic and social problems. In Latin America, which has the highest levels of inequality in the world, the poverty rate, which had fallen during the 1990s, started to rise again and reached 44 percent in 2002. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), within that 44 percent, indigence increased from 18.6 percent to 20 percent since 2001.

Even Argentina, which was once one of the most developed countries in the world, has now an external debt of over $180 billion, which has seriously affected the quality of life of most of the population. In one of its gravest recessions, Argentina received over $6 million in security assistance in 2002 and 2003, and no bilateral economic aid. Costa Rica, which does not have an army, receives slightly more security than social assistance. Plans are underway to reduce economic aid to Ecuador from $46 million to $40 million, while its military and security assistance will increase from $30 million to $49 million.

The fight against narcotrafic is the main reason for US-sponsored military assistance to Latin America. However, military aid has failed to curb the flow of narcotics into the US, which can only be effective by diminishing the significant demand for narcotics in the US

Although much progress has been achieved in Latin America in several health indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality and the fight against several infectious diseases, most countries in the region still face daunting problems due to sprawling urbanization and environmental problems which affect all ages. At the same time, HIV/AIDS, malaria, dengue, and tobacco and substance abuse continue to be serious problems throughout the region. The risk of dying during pregnancy, childbirth and postlabor is 50 times greater in most of the developing countries in the region compared to the US and Canada.

In this context, the Latin American countries need assistance to ovecome these significant threats to stability, equality and development. They desperately need better trade conditions that will allow them to increase their export earnings. They need help in solving pressing health problems in the region. They also need support to strengthen democratic governments and the rule of the law. What the Latin American countries do not need is more military aid.

César Chelala is an award winning writer on human rights issues.

FBI SCRUTINIZES ANTIWAR RALLIES

By ERIC LICHTBLAU

WASHINGTON, Nov. 22 - The Federal Bureau of Investigation has collected extensive information on the tactics, training and organization of antiwar demonstrators and has advised local law enforcement officials to report any suspicious activity at protests to its counterterrorism squads, according to interviews and a confidential bureau memorandum.

The memorandum, which the bureau sent to local law enforcement agencies last month in advance of antiwar demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco, detailed how protesters have sometimes used "training camps" to rehearse for demonstrations, the Internet to raise money and gas masks to defend against tear gas. The memorandum analyzed lawful activities like recruiting demonstrators, as well as illegal activities like using fake documentation to get into a secured site.

FBI officials said in interviews that the intelligence-gathering effort was aimed at identifying anarchists and "extremist elements" plotting violence, not at monitoring the political speech of law-abiding protesters.

The initiative has won the support of some local police, who view it as a critical way to maintain order at large-scale demonstrations. Indeed, some law enforcement officials said they believed the FBI's approach had helped to ensure that nationwide antiwar demonstrations in recent months, drawing hundreds of thousands of protesters, remained largely free of violence and disruption.

But some civil rights advocates and legal scholars said the monitoring program could signal a return to the abuses of the 1960s and 1970s, when J. Edgar Hoover was the FBI director and agents routinely spied on political protesters like the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"The FBI is dangerously targeting Americans who are engaged in nothing more than lawful protest and dissent," said Anthony Romero, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union. "The line between terrorism and legitimate civil disobedience is blurred, and I have a serious concern about whether we're going back to the days of Hoover."

Herman Schwartz, a constitutional law professor at American University who has written about FBI history, said collecting intelligence at demonstrations is probably legal.

But he added: "As a matter of principle, it has a very serious chilling effect on peaceful demonstration. If you go around telling people, 'We're going to ferret out information on demonstrations,' that deters people. People don't want their names and pictures in FBI files."

The abuses of the Hoover era, which included efforts by the FBI to harass and discredit Hoover's political enemies under a program known as Cointelpro, led to tight restrictions on FBI investigations of political activities.

Those restrictions were relaxed significantly last year, when Attorney General John Ashcroft issued guidelines giving agents authority to attend political rallies, mosques and any event "open to the public."

Mr. Ashcroft said the Sept. 11 attacks made it essential that the FBI be allowed to investigate terrorism more aggressively. The bureau's recent strategy in policing demonstrations is an outgrowth of that policy, officials said.

"We're not concerned with individuals who are exercising their constitutional rights," one FBI official said. "But it's obvious that there are individuals capable of violence at these events. We know that there are anarchists that are actively involved in trying to sabotage and commit acts of violence at these different events, and we also know that these large gatherings would be a prime target for terrorist groups."

Civil rights advocates, relying largely on anecdotal evidence, have complained for months that federal officials have surreptitiously sought to suppress the First Amendment rights of antiwar demonstrators.

Critics of the Bush administration's Iraq policy, for instance, have sued the government to learn how their names ended up on a "no fly" list used to stop suspected terrorists from boarding planes. Civil rights advocates have accused federal and local authorities in Denver and Fresno, Calif., of spying on antiwar demonstrators or infiltrating planning meetings. And the New York Police Department this year questioned many of those arrested at demonstrations about their political affiliations, before halting the practice and expunging the data in the face of public criticism.

The FBI memorandum, however, appears to offer the first corroboration of a coordinated, nationwide effort to collect intelligence regarding demonstrations.

The memorandum, circulated on Oct. 15 ¯ just 10 days before many thousands gathered in Washington and San Francisco to protest the American occupation of Iraq ¯ noted that the bureau "possesses no information indicating that violent or terrorist activities are being planned as part of these protests" and that "most protests are peaceful events."

But it pointed to violence at protests against the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as evidence of potential disruption. Law enforcement officials said in interviews that they had become particularly concerned about the ability of antigovernment groups to exploit demonstrations and promote a violent agenda.

"What a great opportunity for an act of terrorism, when all your resources are dedicated to some big event and you let your guard down," a law enforcement official involved in securing recent demonstrations said. "What would the public say if we didn't look for criminal activity and intelligence at these events?"

The memorandum urged local law enforcement officials "to be alert to these possible indicators of protest activity and report any potentially illegal acts" to counterterrorism task forces run by the FBI It warned about an array of threats, including homemade bombs and the formation of human chains.

The memorandum discussed demonstrators' "innovative strategies," like the videotaping of arrests as a means of "intimidation" against the police. And it noted that protesters "often use the Internet to recruit, raise funds and coordinate their activities prior to demonstrations."

"Activists may also make use of training camps to rehearse tactics and counter-strategies for dealing with the police and to resolve any logistical issues," the memorandum continued. It also noted that protesters may raise money to help pay for lawyers for those arrested.

FBI counterterrorism officials developed the intelligence cited in the memorandum through firsthand observation, informants, public sources like the Internet and other methods, officials said.

Officials said the FBI treats demonstrations no differently than other large-scale and vulnerable gatherings. The aim, they said, was not to monitor protesters but to gather intelligence.

Critics said they remained worried. "What the FBI regards as potential terrorism," Mr. Romero of the ACLU said, "strikes me as civil disobedience."

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CHINA BANS PUNKS FROM UK TOURING

By Steve Adams and Adam Williamson

China's only all-girl punk band, Hang on the Box, has been forced to pull out of a UK tour after being denied travel visas by Chinese authorities.

The Chinese government said the band's music is "an inappropriate representation of Chinese culture." The tour was to have started November 17.

Since forming in 1999 as 16-year-old Beijing schoolgirls, the quartet—Wang Yue, Yang Fan, Yilina and Shen Jing—has gained notoriety in China for its hard-hitting, anarchic music, taking its lead from Japanese girl-punk and U.S. new-wave acts.

The band is starting to develop a cult following worldwide. It performed at last year's South by Southwest Music Conference in Austin, Texas, and its second album, *For Every Punk Bitch & Arsehole,* was recently released on Britrish indie label Arrivederci Baby.

A non-official source in Beijing told Billboard, "This happens from time to time. A musical act or a film director will hit the Chinese cultural authorities' radar, and as a result, they are barred from travelling abroad. It doesn't happen as often as it used to, since China stopped requiring exit visas for its citizens. But it does still occur."

A TIME FOR TRUTH ON DU

by Steven Rosenfeld
Published by TomPaine.com

The health impacts of depleted uranium (DU) munitions on soldiers who served in the Iraq and the Persian Gulf Wars will be studied by Congress' General Accounting Office, according to two congressmen who have requested a new investigation into whether the Pentagon has ignored the medical consequences of the armaments.

"We are requesting further investigation by the GAO of the study of veterans exposed to DU during the 1991 Gulf War, and an assessment of current DoD [Department of Defense] and DVA [Department of Veterans Affairs] policies to identify and provide medical care for veterans exposed to DU during Operation Iraqi Freedom," wrote Reps. Bob Filner, D-Calif., and Ciro Rodriguez, D-Texas, in a Dec. 3 letter requesting the congressional inquiry.

"There are many uncertainties about depleted uranium, but one thing is clear: the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs have refused to conduct an adequate study of veterans exposed to DU on the battlefield," said Dan Fahey, a former board member of the National Gulf War Resource Center, a veterans organization, who helped the congressmen frame the GAO inquiry.

"Congressmen Filner and Rodriguez have once again demonstrated their concern for the health of veterans by asking the GAO to investigate what appear to be serious flaws in the VA's study of veterans exposed to DU," Fahey said. "The Pentagon has admitted that thousands of veterans may have been "unnecessarily" exposed to DU during and after the 1991 war—including approximately 900 veterans with significant exposures—but this year the VA assessed the health status of just 32 veterans."

The GAO study of DU's health impacts on soldiers is significant because the very dense and slightly radioactive metal is used extensively in bullets and shells fired by U.S. tanks and jets. It is a byproduct of making nuclear fuel and is more effective than lead bullets, making DU bullets and warheads a key component of the military's arsenal.

DU projectiles puncture almost all metal targets. Due to its m ass and velocity, it breaks up and vaporizes into micron-sized particles upon impact. The Pentagon says DU is safe, but veteran advocates are skeptical, saying the military should scientifically study the most-exposed soldiers to see if they develop illnesses tied to low-level radiation exposure. Such exposure would come from either inhaling or ingesting airborne DU particles from destroyed Iraqi targets or from friendly fire accidents, and the related emergency responses and subsequent clean up.

The health impacts of DU have been a controversial issue. Some anti-nuclear activists say there are traces of deadly nuclear isotopes in the metal, because it is made from spent fuel rods from nuclear power plants. But leading medical journals in the United States and England say more study is needed before definitive conclusions can be reached.

In Iraq, where the Christian Science Monitor last spring reported an estimated 75 tons of the metal was used by the U.S. Air Force last winter and remains scattered on the ground, the military has posted signs in some places warning people to stay away from destroyed targets. Subsequent statements by the British and American militaries lead independent analysts to estimate that 100-to-150 metric tons of DU was used in the Iraq War.

The congressmen, drawing on research prepared by Fahey, have asked the GAO to study whether DU can be linked to cancers and other diseases among Iraq and Persian Gulf War veterans. Before the Iraq War, Fahey unsuccessfully tried to persuade the VA to independently study these same issues.

"DoD's own laboratory studies confirm DU may cause cancer, tumors, neurological damage, and reproductive effects, but the possible connection between DU and disease development in the vast majority of exposed veterans remains unexamined, and therefore, unknown," the congressmen's letter said. "This is of particular concern because it is now almost 13 years since the war, and the latency period for the development of many cancers possibly related to DU is 10 to 30 years."

They cited Fahey's belief that the Pentagon officials have made "false statements" about "the existence of a rare Hodgkin's lymphoma and a bone tumor among veterans in the DU Program, signaling a breakdown in the integrity of the study."

"On at least two occasions in 2001, DoD spokesmen falsely claimed that no veterans in the DU Program had developed cancer, in an apparent attempt to dampen controversy in Europe about the use of DU munitions in the Balkans," they wrote. "In addition, in April 2003, an Army doctor was quoted in press stories falsely claiming that no veterans in the DU Program had developed any tumors. These prevarications beg the question of whether other health effects have been observed among these veterans, but not reported."

That "army doctor" was Dr. Michael Kilpatrick of the Office of the Special Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, who is among the top-raking Pentagon officials who create military health policy. Those remarks were made at a NATO briefing.

The congressman also noted that the Pentagon "previously misled" GAO investigators and the Department of Veterans Affairs about "the extent of veterans' exposures to DU during the 1991 war" and said there was "cause for concern that DoD is not providing complete and accurate information about DU exposures in Iraq."

Fahey said this pattern of repressing information continues to this day.

"The VA is failing in its duty to assist veterans exposed to a known carcinogen on the battlefield, but sadly, it appears that the Pentagon is calling the shots when it comes to DU policy," Fahey said. "Even now, as our troops continue to fight and die in Iraq, the Pentagon refuses to disclose information about its use of DU, or release information to the United Nations Environment Programme about the quantities and locations of DU expenditure."

He said a serious inquiry by the GAO could clear up these and other unknowns. "There is a serious lack of transparency and accountability when it comes to Pentagon and VA policy on DU, but this GAO investigation is a huge first step in understanding what—if any—health effects DU has caused among U.S. troops."

Congressmen Filner and Rodriguez said the results of the GAO study could lead to legislation reorganizing the military's DU health programs.

"Depending on the findings of this GAO investigation, we may wish to introduce legislation requiring a restructuring of the DU Program and extending service-connected benefits to veterans who develop health conditions, such as certain types of cancer that can plausibly be caused by a significant DU exposure," they wrote.

The GAO investigation would most likely be completed by next summer.

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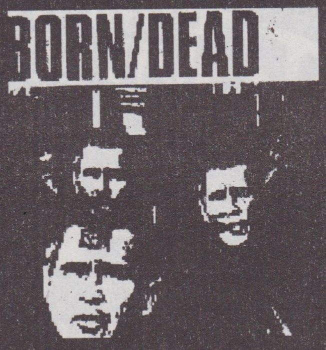

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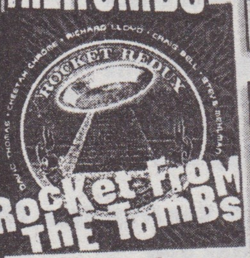

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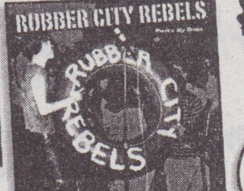

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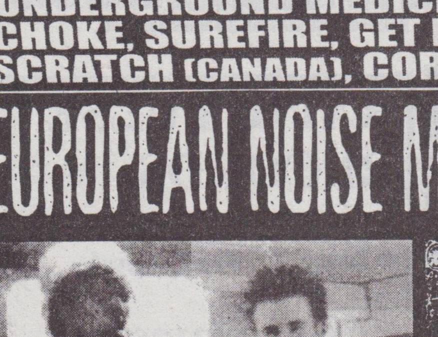
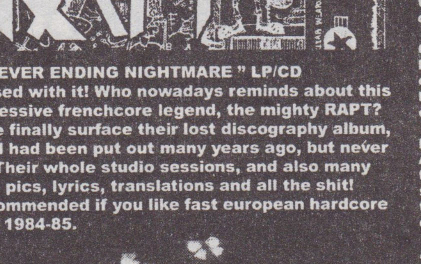


RAPT

RAPT "A NEVER ENDING NIGHTMARE " LP/CD
Get surprised with it! Who nowadays reminds about this damn aggressive frenchcore legend, the mighty RAPT? Speedstate finally surface their lost discography album, that should had been put out many years ago, but never went out. Their whole studio sessions, and also many never seen pics, lyrics, translations and all the shit! Highly recommended if you like fast european hardcore punk circa 1984-85.

LIXOMANIA



LIXOMANIA "VIOLENCIA E SOBREVIVENCIA" LP/CD
A complete reissue pack of the most high rated "Killed by Death" band from South America, contemporary of primal soundmakers as Middle Class, Nitwitz, Typhus, DOA, Lama... It includes their ultra rare and only EP (the 1st individual punk album from Brazil) + around 15 unreleased songs, taken from their 78-83 basement days. This is the FIRST time on 20 YEARS that these brazilian guys get a reissue edition.

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CONCRETE SOX "YOUR TURN NEXT" CD SSR-003
Debut album from 1986 by one of the thrash HC punk originators from mid 80's UK scene (Napalm Death, Ripcord, Heresy, Intense Degree...). Digipack CD also contains extra live, demo & comp stuff.

LOBOTOMIA "S/T" CD SSR-002
A brazilian classic HC album from 1986. These guys forestalled the whole conception of metallic crust style that crossed the late 80's until now. This is their best material so far, out of print since the old days and now available anywhere.

ARMAGEDOM "SILENCIO FUNEBRE" CD SSR-001
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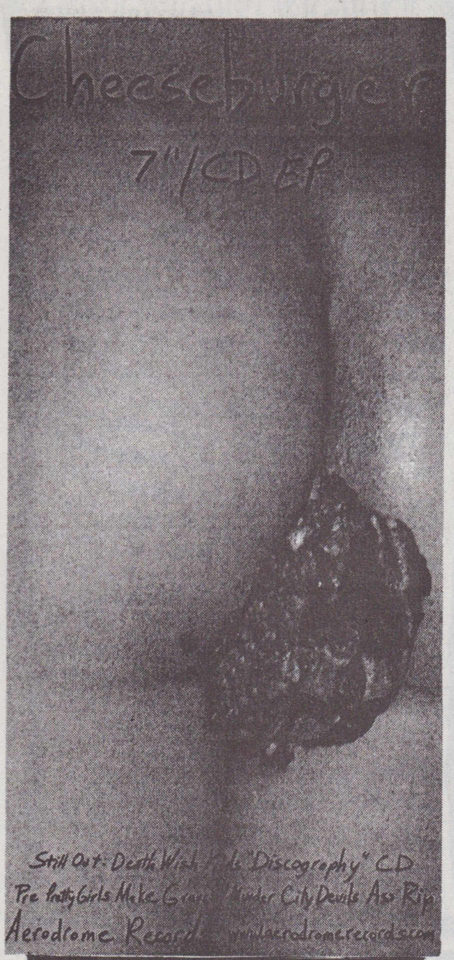

Nero Fiddled While Rome Burned

zine = *$1 U.S. $2 Elsewhere. (No checks)*

JACOB DAVID PO Box 3050 Eureka,CA 95502 USA

Remember The Maine – *or* – ***George Bush Junior Is A Stupid Fascist Warmonger!***

Nero Fiddled While Rome Burned zine (published quarterly) = **$1 U.S.A. $2 Elsewhere. Trades/stamps OK.**

c/o **Jacob David / PO Box 3050 / Eureka, California, USA 95502.** {Please send your letters for publication!}

OK, people. My original intentions vis-à-vis this piece were: to write a lengthy, detailed, intricate theoretical treatise explaining why the above slogan ("George Bush Junior Is A Stupid Fascist Warmonger!) should be utilized by the ever-increasing American political opposition in 2004, much the same way the Clintonites' slogan "It's The Economy Stupid!" was used in 1992 to kick George Bush Senior's ignorant arrogant New World Order Nazi ass out of the White House. But, really now…what in the hell would be the point of that? Anyone with half-of-an I.Q. point already knows that son-of-a Bush squatting at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave in D.C. (thanks to CIA Daddy Bush's appointees/lapdogs on the U.S. Supreme Court) couldn't possibly match wits with the average American eighth-grader, let alone orchestrate a successful "crusade"/colonization of the oil-rich Middle East! So, I say, why bore my brilliant readership with claptrap crap that should be common sense to all already (except, of course, for those Banana Republican Americans unfortunate enough to be both brainwashed *and* brain damaged – *simultaneously*). Screw it…and screw them! As far as I'm concerned, those greedy goose-steppers can take their pretended patriotism and their four flags flying from their gas-guzzling, polar ice cap melting SUVs and shove it straight up their stupid inbred asses! Fuck the fascists!!! Give those unelected Project For A New American Century pricks enough rope, and rest assured – they will hang themselves. (It couldn't of happened to a "nicer" bunch of Nazis!)

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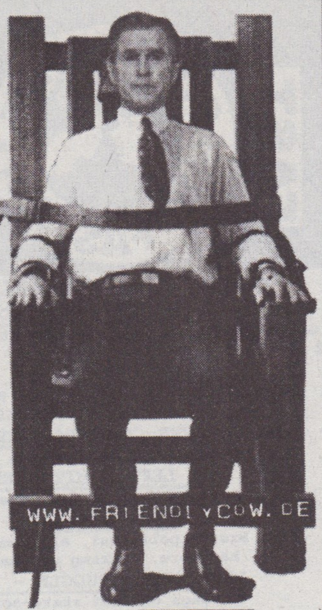

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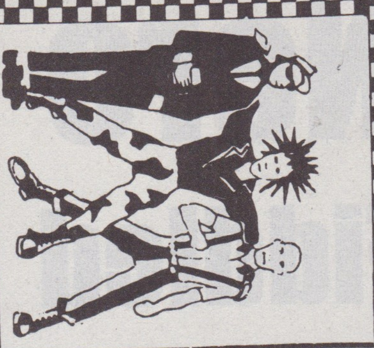

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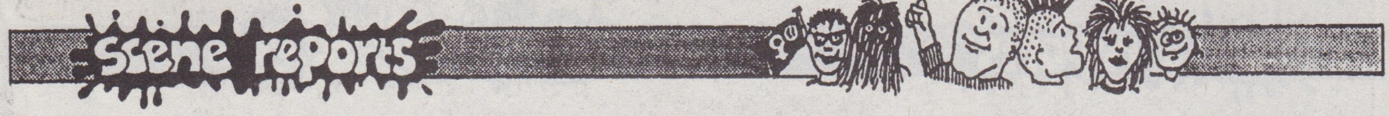
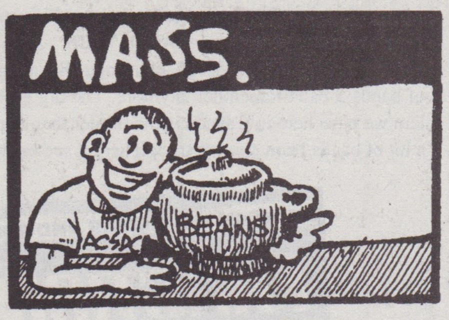




As I write this (Sunday) there is two feet of snow on the ground. No joke. It started to snow Friday night and didn't stop until...well, it still hasn't stopped. Of course, this didn't keep like 150 kids from coming out to see off THE A-TEAM. They only put out a handful of records (two singles and a full length...I think) but their impact on our scene, and the national scene was huge. I couldn't believe that so many people came to the Central Square Elks Lodge on a snowy Saturday afternoon just see their last hurrah. I met some kids from Ohio, who drove 16 hours. I guess there were people there from Tennessee, New York, Chicago and Canada. The line up was a cross section of great hardcore bands in Massachusetts. RNR, who has a new long awaited split 7" with the now defunct SUICIDE FILE, opened the show. I don't think they get enough credit. They also have a new LP out on DEADALIVE Records, which should be out by the time this is printed. If you want a band that brings it to the table and eats it too...RNR is for you. Also, ROCKET PUNCH RECORDS will be releasing the A-TEAM's finally recordings (2 Cheap Trick covers) as a split 7" with RNR. Contact rocketpunchrecords@hotmail.com, and hope they are not sold out. SAY GOODBYE also played. They have a LP in the works also for WESTERN FRONT RECORDS that should also be out by the time this goes to print. Their previous single (also on W.F.) was wicked good. Oh and on a side note, it could be me, but their singer Chris is a dead wringer for a young Jack "Choke" Kelly. LAST IN LINE also played and I guess it was their last show as well? Mike (their Bass player) plays in The PROWL also, so they all might be moving on to greener pastures. They put out some really great records and they will also be missed. The PROWL, on the other hand, just had a 10" put out by DEADALIVE Records. It's awesome...

LAST IN LINE

Some other bands have new records coming out as well. THE SARCASTICS, an Oi/punk band with a guy singer and a girl singer, and RED INVASION, a 77 style punk band, have a split CD coming out on NOT COMMON RECORDS any day now. I haven't heard it, but both bands have a lot of potential. THE STRUGGLE (Haverhill) recorded such a great EP that I decided to put it out as FNS Records #1. It'll be a 4 song EP and you will be able to buy it on our website after January first. CONFRONT is in the studio recording their newest CD. DISASTER STRIKES has returned from a long (a couple of years?) hiatus and have put out a 4 song CD EP. They have also been hosting an occasional show at their Allston "mansion." MENTAL just released a new 7" *Get an Oxygen Tank* on Bridge 9 Records, which also released a new CD by SOME KIND OF HATE, who I'm not big on. Greg, the singer of MENTAL also runs LOCKIN OUT RECORDS, a hardcore label that just put out the STOP AND THINK (NY) *Both Demos* 12". This record is a split release with PAINKILLER RECORDS (their first release was the very last A-Team 7"). Apparently LOCKIN OUT will be releasing a compilation of local and national hardcore bands. Word on the street is it will probably include GET REAL, THE JAGUARZ (who just put out their demo on L.O.), MENTAL (duh!), RIGHTEOUS JAMS, THE WRONG SIDE, SOS, and SAY NO MORE. Keep your ear to the ground. DEFCON 4 just released a fuckin' incredible CD. It was split release with AMMONIA RECORDS and RODENT POPSICLE RECORDS. You should check it out. They are probably the most unique sounding band from the Boston area in a long time. THESE LIES just released their demo, and though I am not a big fan of their live shows, the demo is good. They come from Newburyport, and town on the North Shore. I've been hearing a bunch of good demos from bands in and around Boston lately. In no particular order: BORN IN HELL, MINDERASER, 20-to-1 (who I think are really good), THE HYMEN MANEUVER, MOTION SICKNESS, DSS, THE BAD LIEUTENANTS, RAMPAGE, and MAJOR DANGER. All good, and all worth keeping an eye on. The club situation is still not in great shape. THE ALL ASIA still books bands at the drop of a hat. This means that *any* band can get a show there. This can be a good thing and a bad thing. THE CENTRAL SQUARE ELKS LODGE is rentable and reasonable. Also, TOMMY AND THE TERRORS have dug up a Dee Dee's bar in Quincy for shows. It's 21+ but still...it's better than nothing. In fact rumor has it that SUPERYOB, Famie "Boy" Flame's new band, will be playing there soon. Yay! That's it on the venue front. Kind of sad huh? Well, next time you are trying to figure out whether to go to that show right down the street...remember that some of us, aren't lucky enough to have a cool all-ages punk venue like The Neutron Bomb, The Empress Ballroom, ABC No Rio, or Gilman St. Lucky bastards.

20 to 1

A-TEAM

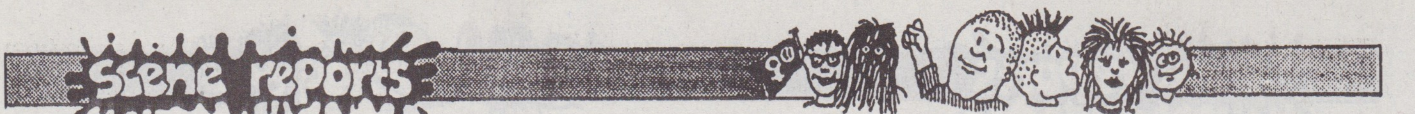
Some more quick tidbits:

The newest TOMMY AND THE TERRORS CD "13 The Hard Way", released on RODENT POPSICLE, will be repressed on vinyl by WELFARE RECORDS, who will also be putting out a CD by a young and unknown high school punk band THE CONTRARY.

Andrew has left THE BONES BRIGADE to focus more time on CUT THE SHIT.

There is a new Boston punk message board! Go to www.BostonPunk.net and link over.

THE DUCKY BOYS are now reunited. I'll guess and say that they will be putting out a new record, and playing out of town. They will be open-



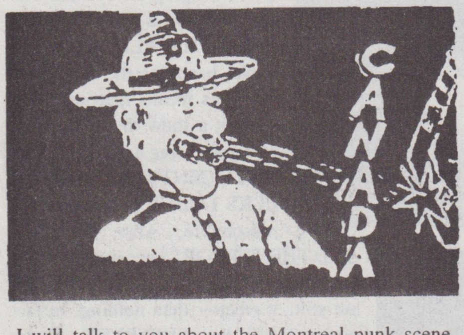
ing for the Dropkick Murphy's on St. Patty's Day.

Our TOUR DIARY ZINE is out and you can get it for cheap. It has tour diaries from THE PHOTON TORPEDOES, who have regretfully broken up (but their drummer Ricky Magic now plays for ZIPPO RAID, THE VIRUS, THE PROFITS, who have a new 7" out called USAtrocity (I haven't heard it but I'm sure it'll kick ass), A GLOBAL THREAT, KERMIT'S FINGER, SUSPECT DEVICE, THE ESCAPED, SWAT, THE CRIMSON GHOSTS, SATAN'S TEARDROPS, THE BLUEBLOODS, THE CHO EXPERIMENT, and even though they've been broken up for a couple of years, SUE BLANKS has donated a BLANKS 77 tour diary from 1995. You should check it out.

STAB AND KILL RECORDS will be changing their name to PERFECT VICTIM RECORDS, due to wanting to be more "professional" I guess....

FIT FOR ABUSE, 20to1, and THE KNOX are all going into the studio to record for future releases.

I am very sorry to everyone who tried to go to our website last report. We switched addresses. Our new address is FNSBoston.NET not .com. You can link over to most of the bands and labels listed in this report.



I will talk to you about the Montreal punk scene starting from 2000, I already did a scene report about the late 70s to 2000 in MRR May 2001. And now it s time to continue till today October 2003. For the bands... it's kind of dead. Not a lot of bands these past years, I don't know why. I guess that punk rock isn't cool anymore, fucking yuppies.

Ok let's start with the most popular band here is BORN DEAD ICONS. They 've just release a new full length LP/CD last April 2003 on Feral Ward Records. Didn 't here it enough to comment. Live there always loud and awesome. They've been touring a lot these days, Europe in March & April 2003, and USA in October with La Fraction. If you never herd of this band, get out now and go buy a Born Dead Icons record. Contact BORN DEAD ICONS: apt202@hotmail.com Next band is HELLBOUND. For everyone that never herd of HELLBOUND, they are like Wolfpack with male and female vocals! Very heavy hell-crushing crust. They just released a split album with Waves on MCR Records. It's a CD but in the packaging of a 7". They don 't play or tour a lot because they had band problems, but they did tour the USA this past November 2003 with INEPSY. Contact HELLBOUND: http://hellbound.4t.com/ INEPSY just release a new full length LP/CD this October 2003 on Feral Ward Records. The recording quality is amazing! INEPSY is like an old punk d-beat mixed with rock & roll. The roots that's all! Contact INEPSY:
www.geocities.com/inepsyl/inepsy.html
Another band that's very intense these days in Montreal is BALLAST. They have male/female vocals raging His Hero Is Gone with a bit of Post Regiment. It's a very good mix and done well! They released a demo tape, and it's very good! Contact BALLAST: ballastmtl@yahoo.com BEAUTY DROPOUT (broke up in September 2003) was a very good band. An all female band. They sounded like Bikini Kill attacking the Circle Jerks. I loved to see them live, the signer was really entertaining. And they put out two demos on Sick & Twisted Records, with a bad recording, so you had to see them live. We will miss you. A band is DOOMED SS. They play fast raw d-beat punk. They are made up of members of DECONTROL and HELLBOUND. If you like fast raging d-beat, you will love DOOMED SS. Contact Doomed SS through HELLBOUND. The UNCIVILIZED is a street punk band mix with Varukers and Conflict. They've been together for a while now. They have an album out on Wounded Paw. I've never heard it so I can't comment. Contact The Uncivilized: www.woundedpaw.com Another old band that just reunited is CULTIVATEUR CONTESTATAIRE. They just reformed like a year ago. They'e more into metal but funny at the same time. They have a demo tape that was release a few years ago. The sound quality is really good. Contempt For Humanity Records is putting out the demo tape on a CD. They're planning to record a new full length album soon. Metal heads check them out! Contact CULTIVATEUR CONTESTATAIRE:
www.geocities.com/cultivateurs666
A very good oi/street punk band is The PROWLERS. This band is so good that I didn't believe that they were from here. I never heard such a great oi/street punk band from Montreal before. Always a first! They released an album on Mad Butcher Records, and its sounds great! If you like this kind of music, you will love them. Contact The PROWLERS: mtlskin@hotmail.com HANDS OF DEATH is another band from Montreal. HANDS OF DEATH sounds like if you put a metal head in a blender with a bunch of punk rockers, crusties and stoners. Imagine all this mixed together, a weird mix but they do it very well! They have been touring a lot of Europe. They've toured Europe twice. They have a new album out on their own label Contempt for Humanity. If you like violent music well you will love them. Contact HANDS OF DEATH:
www.cfhrec.com/hod/info.html A very fast band from Montreal is AND THE SAGA CONTINUES. They play really fast hardcore, I would call it power violence. They've been together for a couple of years now. This band is very good live. They just release a new album on Contempt For Humanity. I haven't heard it yet. Contact AND THE SAGA CONTINUES: www.rudesolo.com/saga Ok enough of bands, I can't remember anymore. The big problem we have here in Canada is the border that stops a lot of bands from coming trough here. I see on the

BORN DEAD ICONS

internet, sometimes, bands touring the USA., and they are playing about 2 hours away from here, what the fuck?! Why didn't they think of coming here? Is it because they think it sucks here or they just scared of the fucking borders? 85% of bands are scared of the borders. It sucks because a lot of the time I have to drive far away in the States to go see a show and I 'm not the only one. And that doesn't help our scene. Yes local bands are good but we need more sometimes.

The perfect example: The Exploited was supposed to play here on October 14 2003, but they didn't cross the borders. There were kids from all over Quebec here in Montreal to see The Exploited—so the kids were pissed off and broke everything they saw! They started a riot, and it was crazy! 42 cars trash and burned, fourteen stores were trashed and burned, two cops injured and seven were arrested. That is proof right there that we don't see a lot of bands from other countries.

FUCKING BORDERS!

Halls & venues:

L'X is still opened, big venue 2 floors, all ages, capacity is 365, but now its mostly new school pop punk bands that are playing there—mostly because of what I said before about the borders. You have to be a bit popular to play here because it's pretty damn big.

Contact L'X: www.geocities.com/salledelx

Another place for shows is the Loud House. This place is really underground, DIY and kind of illegal. The place itself is not illegal, but having shows there is and everyone drinking there is kind of illegal, but I like it. A few people live there so we don 't do shows that often, once a month only between September to March. In the summer the neighbors opened their windows and complained about the loud punk noise. We've been doing shows at Loud House since September 2000. This is where I book most of my shows. Contact me for shows at the Loud House I'm working on a video comp right now about shows at the Loud House. It will be called *Live at Loud House*. It will be available in the winter of 2004. I'm trying to do very good production and it's all done by me so it's fucking DIY Contact me for more info about this video comp.

And for smaller shows we booked them at Cafe' Chaos, The Gates Of Hell, or Barfly.

Cafe' Chaos is a little college kid bar, a lot of punks and skins hang out at this bar though. They have a very nice show space. The Gates Of Hell is a warehouse of about 1500 square feet. Small but fun! And the sound is good! Barfly is a shitty ass bar that no one goes to, so they let us book shows there, very small and no air. This place kinda sucks but it is good to see a show somewhere else sometimes. So come on down and play Montreal, we have a good reputation for shows—ask anyone that played here. If you're scared of crossing the borders, here are a few tips: Use a fake ID, a family members ID or someone you know very well and who looks kinda like you. I have friends that done it a few times and it seems to work. Or you can also pass trough the woods (illegally) and that works good, but it is scary. I had a lot of friends that did that and still do it today. So stop being a wimp and live fun in your life take the highway to hell! For any info about getting shows in Montreal, or the video comp. Contact me: Steve Bennett:

awkwardproductions@hotmail.com

PS: DIY hardcore and punk bands only! No ska, emo, or pop punk bands.

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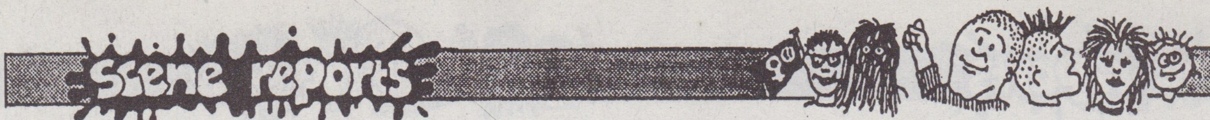
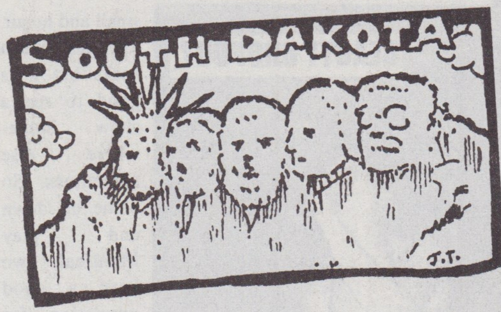
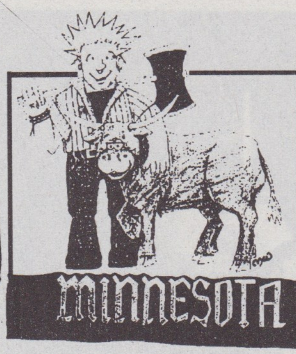






Southern Minnesota & South Dakota

There is more punk rock heart and compassion in Minnesota besides the harbinger Minneapolis scene. Case in point: 75 miles to the south, in Mankato, the local scene has received a gust of wind in the past two years. A revival of collective efforts has just lost the odds at regaining the former renowned DIY venue MARTI'S, which hosted a lot of gigs in the early 90s. That's the spot where FIFTEEN played naked for six months when their van broke down, skateboard tricks donned during the "Punk in Drublic" tour, and where all the old farts lament about that one JAWBREAKER show back in '94. The collective show organizers SLAMBAM are still promoting events, which are held in LUCY'S BARN, THE FILLING STATION, and at the occasional local bar like the WHAT'S UP LOUNGE. LUCY'S BARN is the best DIY show space and most profitable for out-of-town bands. Lucy, who lives on the property the Barn, is a great young woman who has opened this fantastic, spacious old wooden structure to all bands who will come and play. It sounds great inside, and there is an apple tree on the property to feed off of while waiting in between sets. THE FILLING STATION is a coffee shop on S. Front that has hosted shows on and off for about ten years.

Local hardcore yokels DRYSOCKET have just finished recording and mastering a full length. They play fast, and have guitars and drums combined with vocals, which makes them stand apart from the eclectic homoerotic dance quartet NANCI CLANCI ANI who put out a cdr release that is too good not to have herd. NANCI CIANCI ANI scams food at the old country buffet nightly and members appear to have an extensive collection of vintage Thrasher skate magazine tshirts. DRYSOCKET will most likely be doing some touring within the next year, so keep a heads-up for this quintet of rock-solid, metal-laced action that is sure to please.

On the other end of the spectrum, OLSEN TWIN SUICIDE has been opening shows for out-of-town acts and steadily bringing more substance with each performance. They play fast, rhythmic hardcore.

Zach of the OTS has become a figure that does most of the booking for shows and is a really down-to-earth guy for a prospective lawyer. Artcore noise nerds MATH BALANCE VOLUMES keep releasing obscure packaged recordings that feature instruments like a Theramin, bass guitars played with cello bows, and other vocal oddities mixed in.

Longtime staple diet record shop Ernie Novembers closed its doors and moved to back to its headquarters in South Dakota, taking with it Steven of Mankato's INIT RECORDS. Steven is putting out more records by the hardcore bands ANYODYNE, DISPENSING OF FALSE HALOS, and a SPIRIT OF VERSAILLES discography. INIT RECORDS also did a repressing of the Fighting the Urge to Start Fires'7" from the championed melodic hardcore group MARKATO, which is a highly coveted record by all who hear it. MARKATO has suffered some lineup changes with members who cover a distance from Minneapolis to central Iowa, and they play one out of every five shows they are supposed to headline.

150 miles to the west and over the border into Sioux Falls, South Dakota, east of the Missouri river, the punk scene seems to be suffering from a battle between Satan and the holy rockers on high. A town that once was the home of the great now-defunct bands CALIGARI and SPIRIT OF VERSAILLES seems to be suffering some scene setbacks.

In the words of the great David Cross, "leave it to Christians," who have sprouted up a gaggle of Jesus-core bands who seem to mimic the local god-fearing favorites NODES OF RANVIER, who put out a CD on FACEDOWN RECORDS a few months ago. The funniest part is the criticism that they received from the young Christian lads who felt that they "did not honor their god enough in this last release." Nevertheless, one of the churches has a pseudo rock club in its basement that does these Christ-core shows, complete with an autographed POD poster on the wall. Lucifer save us from these little devils.

Stonercore burnouts EXAMINATION OF THE... no longer are in existence, after putting out a largely ignored and rejected full length six months ago. EXAMINATION OF THE... sounds very much like a mix of Neurosis and ISIS. More specifically, they broke up, since frontman Tanner is under indictment and on the run for stealing audio equipment from several area churches and selling it on eBay. Before his flight from the law, it's reported that he managed to steal the scene PA and microphones that had been procured through show profits over the past four years. Last spotted heading for Denver, this closeted glamrocker could be spotted at a meth manufacturer near you.

There are some shows happening that feature younger bands like WITNESS and ska rockers THE UNIES who both have been opening up for out-of-town acts for the past year. THE BLINDING LIGHT, who put out a 7" entitled Glass Bullet on INIT RECORDS last year, get together and play a show every six months or so, since members live in various states. THE BLINDING LIGHT has acquired a new frontman who comes from the formally heralded band THREADBARE. Jayson, who does WIPE YOUR EYES booking, is bringing in bands, but seems to do more lucrative hip hop shows nowadays. Considering the consecutive times he's eaten shit on rock shows, perhaps this is his best course of action to keep punk bands coming to Sioux Falls. The WASHINGTON PAVILION is the newest venue used for shows—it is extremely nice, but expensive, and accommodates out-of-town rock acts very well. In addition, Jayson from WIPE YOUR EYIES will do a house show once in a while for a band that he is willing to help out.

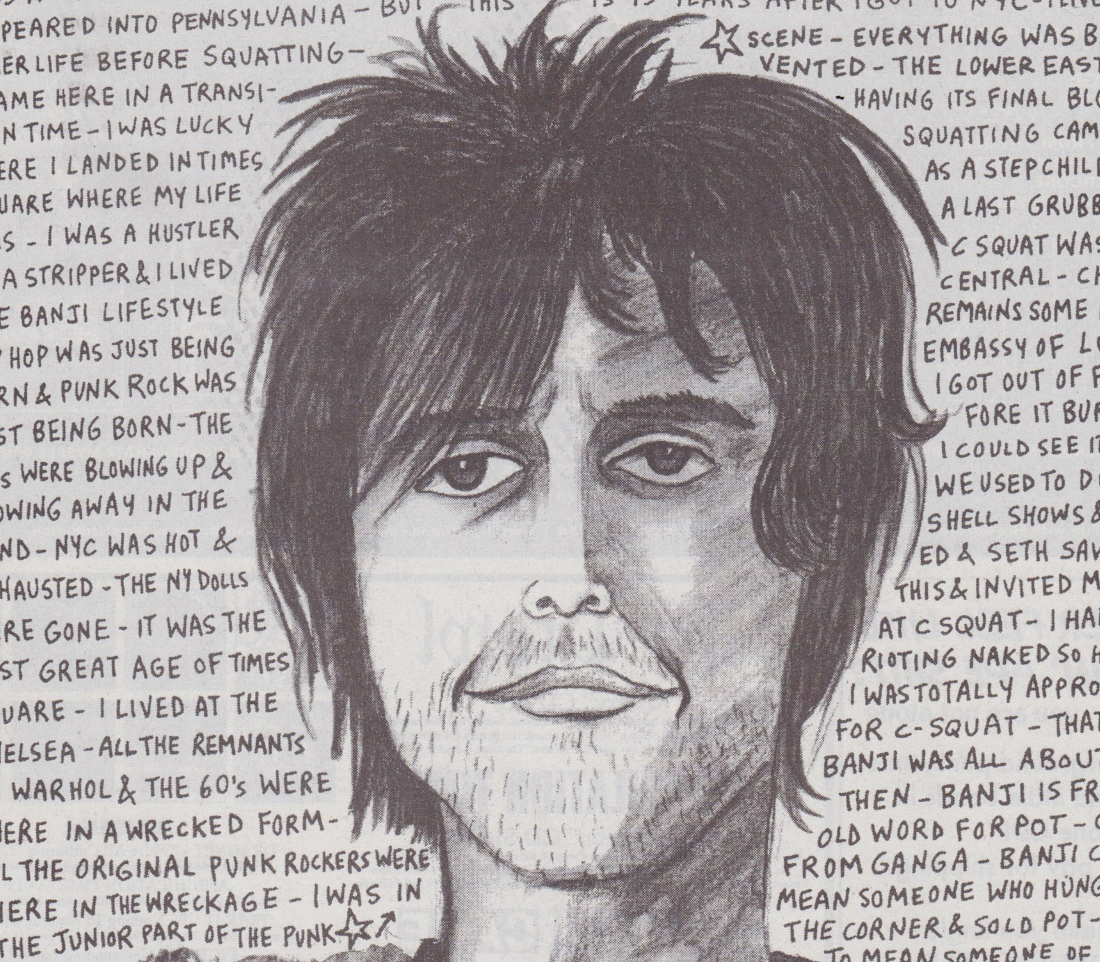
Lastly, THE REDDMEN, from Rapid City, South Dakota have put out a great new CD called Sons ofthe Morning Star, which is straightforward pop punk with a garage rock feel. They also play the SCARED OF CHAKA cover version of MC5's "Teenage Lust" when requested, which wails, since they boast a former member of SOC. Although they are from west of the Missouri River, THE REDDMEN deserve credit for being great people, picking me up on the "Raspberry Beret" spring tour, for their ancestors whose land we stole, and being members of an indigenous culture who created the place names that our region has adopted. THE REDDMEN are a very DIY band and are fun people to watch the movie Predator with. Rapid City shows are usually held at an area VFW or near one of the colleges.

Last but certainly not least, there's a tribute to MATT DAVIS of the Iowa City group TEN GRAND who were loved and admired by the regional scene. The death of MATT DAVIS from a brain hemorrhage in mid-August was a shock to everybody who had the chance to experience this awesome performer. He will be missed.

The cities of Mankato, Sioux Falls, and Rapid City are great stops for bands heading to or from the Minneapolis metropolitan area, and are frequented often by punk rockers doing extensive tours of the Midwest. Get in touch with the folks below or contact someone else to book a show or hang out.

Tj Smith
Find me on the Book Your Own Fucking Life page
www.byofl.org
sea of seed zine
seaofseed@yahoo.com
Mankato Minnesota Punk and Hardcore Forum
http://www. creativemankato. com/theforum/
Rapid City South Dakota Punk Rock
http://www. cameranoise. com/rcpunkrock/
Sioux Falls South Dakota
Wipe Your Eyes booking / message board / zine
http://www.wipeyoureyes.com/index2.html
Init Records http://www.initrecords.com
The Reddmen http://www.hpcnet.org/thereddmen

I WAS LIVING IN A SPICE FACTORY IN WHAT IS NOW TRIBECA & THE NEW LANDLORD RIPPED THE DOORS OFF... NO THATS WRONG - I CAME TO THE LOWER EAST SIDE BECAUSE OF A PICTURE I SAW IN THE VILLAGE VOICE WHILE I WAS IN TORONTO - I SAW A PICTURE OF A BUNCH OF MUSICIANS STANDING IN FRONT OF CBGB's - IT WAS 1975 - NO!! I KNOW WHY I CAME HERE! - I GOT OFF A BUS IN TIMES SQUARE ON A LAY-OVER & IT WAS ALL GUADY & IT STANK - IT WAS BEAUTIFUL & INCREDIBLE - I ENDED UP LIVING HERE & DOING WHAT EVERY ONE DOES - BOTTOMING OUT - GOT THROWN OUT BY MY GIRLFRIEND - SLEPT IN TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK - SAME STORY AS EVERYBODY - I WAS DESPERATE & HEARD THAT THERE WERE PEOPLE OPENING UP SQUATS - I LIVED IN 327-29 - THE 8th ST SQUATS & FETUS - BOTH MY FIRST 2 SQUATS BURNT DOWN - WE TOOK IN THE PARKS PEOPLE AFTER GUILIANI CLOSED THE PARK & ONE OF THEM WAS AN ARSONIST WHO BEAT HIS WIFE WAS TOLD HE COULDNT DO IT & THERE WAS A CONFRONTATION - WHEN THE POLICE LEFT HE POURED KEROSENE ON EVERYTHING & LIT IT UP & DISAPPEARED INTO PENNSYLVANIA - BUT THIS IS 15 YEARS AFTER I GOT TO NYC - I LIVED A WHOLE OTHER LIFE BEFORE SQUATTING - I CAME HERE IN A TRANSITION TIME - I WAS LUCKY WHERE I LANDED IN TIMES SQUARE WHERE MY LIFE WAS - I WAS A HUSTLER & A STRIPPER & I LIVED THE BANJI LIFESTYLE HIP HOP WAS JUST BEING BORN & PUNK ROCK WAS JUST BEING BORN - THE 60's WERE BLOWING UP & BLOWING AWAY IN THE WIND - NYC WAS HOT & EXHAUSTED - THE NY DOLLS WERE GONE - IT WAS THE LAST GREAT AGE OF TIMES SQUARE - I LIVED AT THE CHELSEA - ALL THE REMNANTS OF WARHOL & THE 60's WERE THERE IN A WRECKED FORM - ALL THE ORIGINAL PUNK ROCKERS WERE THERE IN THE WRECKAGE - I WAS IN THE JUNIOR PART OF THE PUNK ☆ ☆ SCENE - EVERYTHING WAS BEING INVENTED - THE LOWER EAST SIDE WAS HAVING ITS FINAL BLOWOUT - SQUATTING CAME ALONG AS A STEPCHILD TO THAT A LAST GRUBBY PARTY - C SQUAT WAS CRUSTY CENTRAL - CHAOS - IT REMAINS SOME KIND OF EMBASSY OF LUNACY - I GOT OUT OF FETUS BEFORE IT BURNED DOWN I COULD SEE IT COMING - WE USED TO DO BANDSHELL SHOWS & GET NAKED & SETH SAW ME DOING THIS & INVITED ME TO LIVE AT C SQUAT - I HAD BEEN RIOTING NAKED SO HE THOUGHT I WAS TOTALLY APPROPRIATE FOR C-SQUAT - THATS WHAT BANJI WAS ALL ABOUT BACK THEN - BANJI IS FROM THE OLD WORD FOR POT - COMES FROM GANGA - BANJI CAME TO MEAN SOMEONE WHO HUNG OUT ON THE CORNER & SOLD POT - THEN CAME TO MEAN SOMEONE OF INDETERMINATE SEXUALITY WHO HUNG OUT IN CLUBS - & THAT MORPHED INTO "B-BOY" THE ORIGINAL NAME OF MY BAND WAS BANJI STRIP DEATH ✕



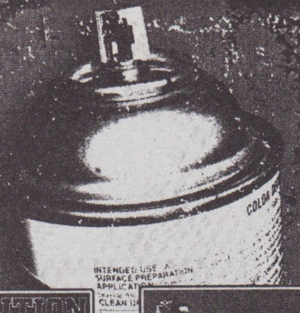
POPEYE - 08/2K3 - C SQUAT NYC

I FIRST MET POPEYE BACK IN THE EARLY 90S WHEN I STARTED SQUATTING IN THE LOWER EAST SIDE OF NYC—HE HAD DREADS BACK THEN & WAS ALWAYS SPEEDING AROUND THE CITY ON SKATES—POPEYE LOOKS LIKE A KID & ITS HARD TO BELIEVE HE IS ACTUALLY NOW IN HIS 50S—HE GAVE US ALL A HUGE SCARE LAST SUMMER WHEN HE HAD A HEART ATTACK BUT HE HAS RECOVERED & IS STILL KICKIN' & SCREAMIN'. TO CONTACT POPEYE SEND POST TO C SQUAT 155 AVE C NYC NY10009 USA.

FOR BANJI CD CONTACT: ETYSO@AOL.COM

TO CONTACT FLY: FLY@BWAY.NET WEBSITE: WWW.BWAY.NET/~FLY - CHECK OUT MY LATEST BOOK, PEOPs, AT WWW.SOFTSKULL.COM

THE CHANGE



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the Prowl

"Misery" CD / 10"

Alternating between fast, gritty hardcore anthems (Adolescents, Necros) and slow, atomospheric punk (Samhain, Wipers, TSOL), "Misery" is a manic ride through a twisted mind. Turn the lights down low and close the door. The future is coming.

ANNIHILATION TIME

"Bad Reputation" CD Single / 7"

The best band on the planet return with a new 4 song EP and a new singer. "Bad Reputation" is the audio equivalent of doing 'ludes with Hells Angels in the parking lot of a Deep Purple concert and blasting Black Flag's "Live '84" in your headphones. This is Rock N'Roll California.

THINK I CARE

s/t CD / LP

This is quite possibly the meanest, most violent sounding hardcore record to be let out of it's cage since Voorhees' "Spilling Blood..." LP. You are being lied to, abused, and taken advantage of by society and Think I Care are the voices in your head. For fans of Infest, DYS and Sheer Terror.

the RITES

s/t CD / LP

Fast, high energy hardcore brought to you by members of Tear It Up, Cut the Shit, and Down In Flames. Use Poison Idea's "Pick Your King" as a reference point. Real fucking vicious. CD format contains their "Your Last Rites" 7" and a live radio set.

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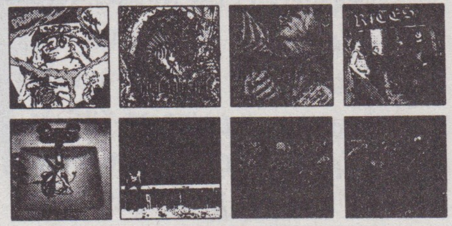
Listen to free MP3s and check out our enormous online store with over 1,500 hardcore, punk, and fucked up rock records, CDs, shirts and more. Safe, fast, and easy. Listen to more Black Sabbath. Thanks!



ALSO AVAILABLE:

DRAGNET - "We're All Cutthroats" CD / LP
(Fast, memorable hardcore with a slight modern sound)

ANNIHILATION TIME - s/t LP
(Black Flag via Bl'ast! influenced motherfuckers. Pettibon cover art.)

TEAR IT UP - Nothing To Nothing CD / LP
(A modern classic. DRI, Black Flag, and Youth of Today all come to mind.)

VICTIMS - Neverendinglasting LP
(Steamroller Swedish hardcore juggernaut. Smokes!)

SELFISH - Cry For Love, Cry For Death CD / LP
(Japanese hardcore via Finland. Death Side worship? Possibly, but where's the problem?)

BORN DEAD ICONS - Work CD / LP
(Thundering hardcore from Montreal. One of the best in N. America. Their 1st LP.)

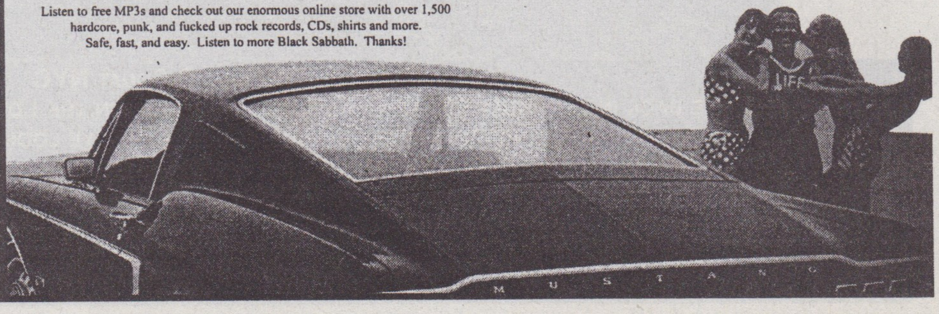
CUMMING SOON:

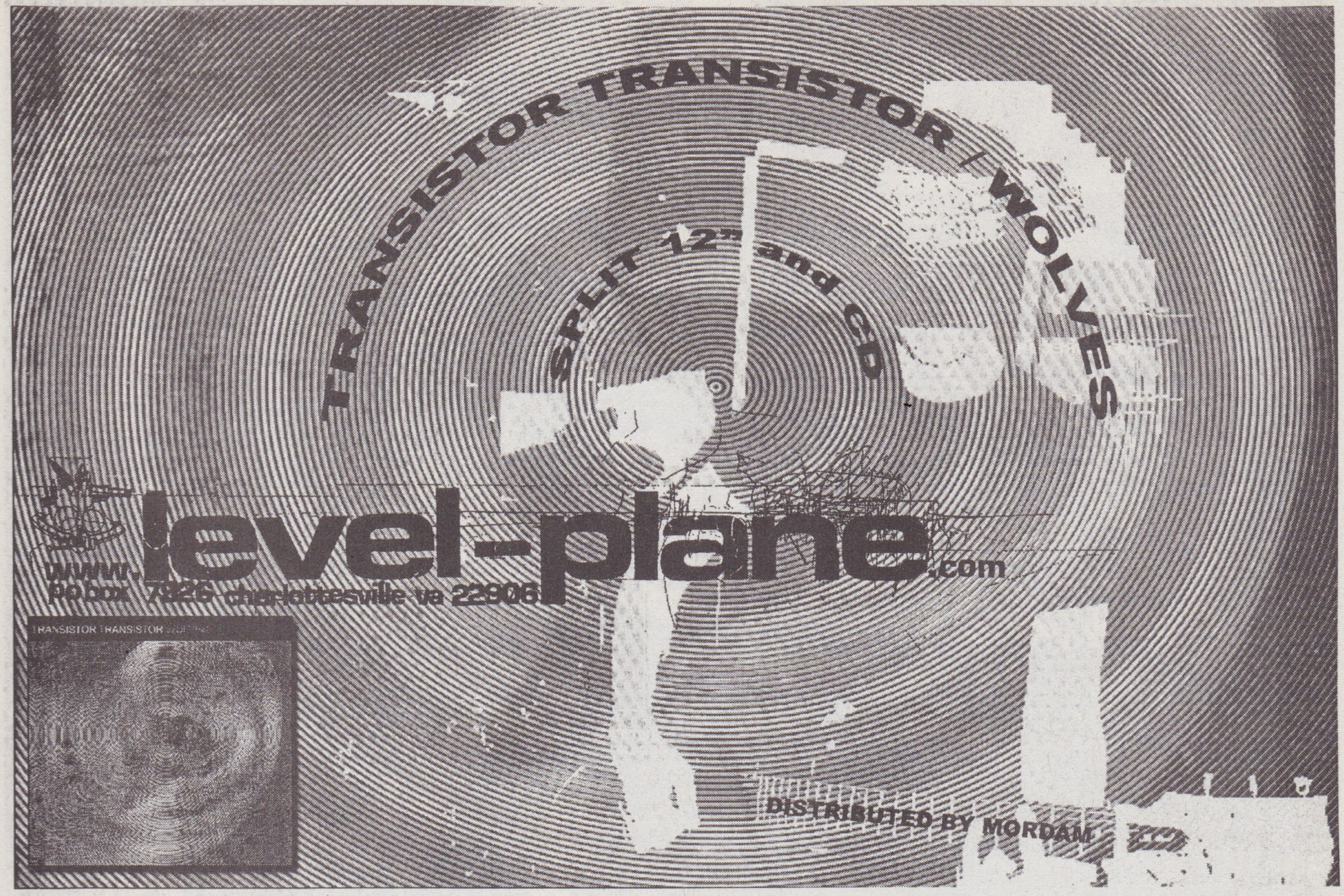
R'N'R - The Infamous and Notorious CD / LP
(Ferocious rock inspired hardcore from some Think I Care folks.)

STRAIGHT TO HELL - We Will Bury You CD / LP
(Mean Scandinavian styled hardcore from members of Dropdead and Ulcer.)

SEX MANIACS - Mean As Hell CD / LP
(Like AC/DC fucking the Dwarves in your sister's bedroom. Real big balls on this one.)

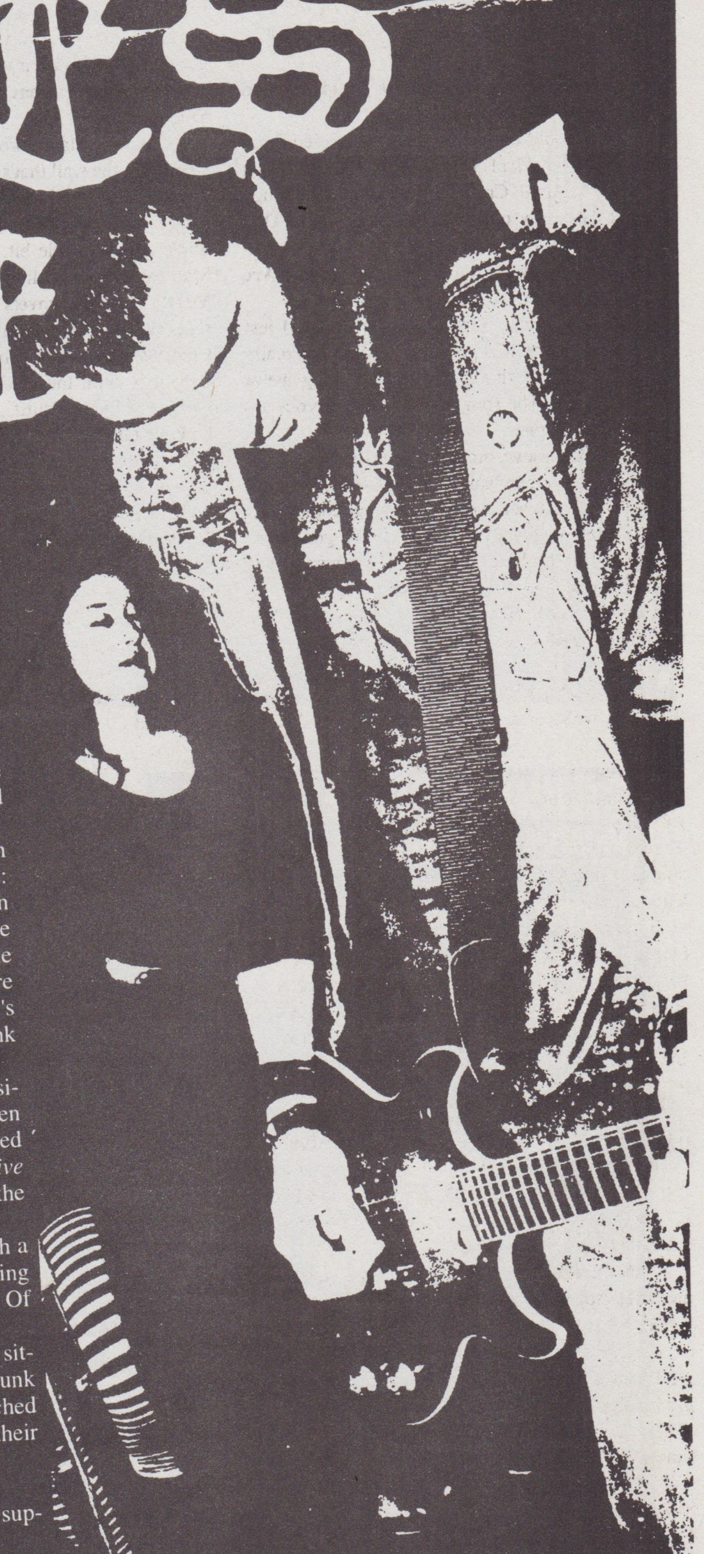
FULL SPEED AHEAD - Born To Lose CD / LP
(After 3 years we saved this future skatepunk classic from the shelves. Pushead art.)





Available Jan. 27th - "66 Thousand Miles Per Hour" - debut graphic novel by Johnny X
Available now - Sticks & Stones "The Strife and Times" - Vision "Detonate" - The Bouncing Souls "Do You Remember?" - Rob Santello "Bloodclots In The Mainstream"

FROM ASHES RISE



"Funny enough, I've been listening to the first Jets to Brazil over and over again. I don't know why I'm doing this... I feel like I'm going crazy. It's not that I love this album that much, but for god's sake, I'm bored out of my fucking mind."

I had called guitarist/vocalist John Wilkerson at Brickwall Records, the Portland store started by his bandmate Billy Davis and Shari from Harum Scarum. John's watching the store as Billy's on tour with Tragedy and and the retailing is, as John puts it, "fucking boooring as shit."

When *MRR* last left From Ashes Rise, the band was cruising on the top of the hardcore crust wave with their peers His Hero is Gone and later, the well-received Tragedy. The terms "that dark, Tennessee-style hardcore" were ubiquitous as their influence spread across record review pages in hardcore zines all over the world.

Of course, such garnered popularity invites more attention. From Ashes Rise soon found themselves pursued by an unlikely candidate: Jade Tree Records. The label owners had heard of the band when an employee brought records by From Ashes Rise and Deathreat into the office. Known mainly for releasing records by emo-pop swingers The Promise Ring and post-rock "rockers" Joan of Arc, the large Delaware indie label had solidified itself as one of the foundations of today's mainstream emo—which is far from where owners (and hardcore punk veterans) Tim Owen and Darren Walters want to be.

For both the label and the band, a lot is at stake with this proposition. From Ashes Rise could lose hard-earned credibility from even their most diehard fans for stepping up into an indie mini-industry filled with public relations firms, full-color advertisements in *Alternative Press*, and the subconscious pressure of mainstream appeal. "Up the punx," my ass.

Likewise, Jade Tree's fans would shrug off From Ashes Rise with a cynical, sniffling, "Whatever..." and the record would be a long running joke of "Remember when Jade Tree tried to do the *metal* thing?" Of course they'll all have forgotten about last decade's Damnation AD.

Like two versed skydivers, both parties jump into this high risk situation holding hands, confident that the boundaries set by the punk underground and the indie mainstream won't fire until they've touched the ground. John and I's conversation starts just mere days before their new LP, *Nightmares*, drops into retail outlets across the country.

Additional comments from guitarist/vocalist Brad Boatright were supplied from a call to his Portland home.
Interview by Vincent Chung.
Photos by Joshua Peach.

MRR: You've been doing interviews all week, who have they been with?

Brad: I did one with *Alarm* magazine. John did one with *Scratch* magazine. Did one with *Rockpile* the day before yesterday. I did one with—of all magazines—*The Portland Mercury* which is the local weekly here. It was kind of weird at first because the idea of having a local paper calling me was kind of like "Oh my God, what's going on?" It actually went really well, which have been the case with all of the interviews.

MRR: David [from Hopper PR] and I joked about getting this in *Vice*.

John: That would be fucking hilarious to see From Ashes Rise in *Vice*! I love that magazine just because of David Cross' little column, although *Vice* can be really out there sometimes. The Do's and Don'ts section is soooo brutal.

MRR: So you have a new album coming out. Are you pretty excited about that?

Brad: Yeah, we just got the vinyl on Friday. I just saw them for the first time last night. I'm really fucking excited. I think it's the best thing we've done musically. The songwriting and the lyrics are the best we've done.

John: I think it's awesome. It's crazy because—and I hope that all other bands do this—when you get the record, like when we got our vinyl copies yesterday, immediately Brad was like "We got copies of them!" and I'm like "Yeah! Yeah! I wanna go see them!" I hope that people always have the anticipation and the excitement of the first time you hold a record that you've worked on. To me, I'm holding this extreme wealth of memories and thoughts and time and sweat that's gone into it. I think it's the best thing that we've done and I'm totally stoked that it's out.

MRR: How is it better?

Brad: For me, there's more effort. I'm more satisfied with the songwriting part of it. We spent a little bit more time with them this time around. The first couple LPs and the second one especially were just kind of rushed and thrown together. The first one we kind of got lucky on. I think it's still a great record. I think we got lucky in the fact that we threw parts together and it came out as a solid record. And then we tried it again for the second record and it kind of didn't work out. I'm not that satisfied with it. But other people in the band are more satisfied with it than I am.

The newer album is also better because the other times, we were on tour. The split was done while we were on tour, too. It was really hard being on tour and then recording. To be like "We have to be in L.A. tomorrow for mixing, do we even have that much time to spend on this?"

With the new one, we just sat in the basement and wrote songs for two months. They're a little different, but everything is better. It felt better. It was exciting because we went to a different studio and work with somebody else. It sounds more like rock production than a blown out hardcore record but I like it. I think it kind of fits. It's a little sedate at times, but I like that. I think the lyrics can add to that. There's definitely a lot of inspiration for the lyrics, given what was going on at the time. Everything just felt perfect for me.

MRR: How is this record going to be different than the others?

John: Well, it's not really.

MRR: I mean, (laughing) is it totally going to be an emo record or something?!

John: Yeah! It's totally going to be emo. Actually, there's an instrumental Slint track in the middle. So I hope people *hate* that. That would be great. It's just proving that we're real musicians and that we're proving that we can be as good as those bands.

MRR: Well, when you play that part live, you're going to have to turn your backs to the crowd so no one can see what you're picking! Just like Slint!

John: I know! Maybe we can actually *project* something onto the wall that's really abstract and thought provoking. Actually we'll have to get Matt Bayles and fly him out with a baby grand piano that he can tinkle on for a little bit. We'll get Jade Tree to fly Matt from show to show so he can play his piano.

MRR: He only travels by plane! Tell me about him. What's this guy all about?

Brad: Matt Bayles is kind of a big time producer right now with the Hydrahead scene and a lot of indie rock kind of stuff. And rightly so. The guy is fucking talented. In 20 years, he's going to be a huge producer like Bob Rock.

Billy knew Matt twelve years ago. Matt went the same recording school that John and I went to. And he caught the window of opportunity perfectly because he got there right before [that school] blew up. He went when it still had small classes. I had 300 people in my classes while his were probably around 30. While he was there, for one of his projects, he recorded Billy's old band, Face Down. And then put out the Face Down/Cop Out split on his own label.

Matt graduated, moved to Seattle, and started interning on Soundgarden and Pearl Jam records. Then he got his foot in the door at Studio Litho, which is Stone Gossard from Pearl Jam's studio. That's where we recorded. He got a really, really sweet deal there and they let him work there. The guy's fucking good. He's a total whip cracker, too. That's something we had never dealt with before as we were used to dealing with engineers who weren't producers. Engineers who would say, "Well, are you guys comfortable with that out of tune guitar?" If it's *really* bad, then they would say, "Yeah, you should probably do it again," but usually they would just let it fly. Matt was just so meticulous with everything. He would say, "You guys really need to do this again. You need to redo these vocals, they're out of time." Stuff that I wouldn't even hear! So, I was really into that. We need that outside person to help out and give us their opinion.

John: It's definitely weird for the first time you record with somebody, there's that moment where you put down your instrument and walk into the control room thinking, "What is this going to sound like?" Is this going to sound like a pop record or is this going to sound good? The trust level builds right there. Once we got there, we knew that Matt knew what he was doing.

And it's good because he helped *produce* a lot of it. He would have a lot of third party mediation whenever we were arguing about something. We'd ask him what he would think and he would give his opinion. He's really into making everything as perfect as he can be. That's the one thing about our record is that it's *extremely* tight. The vocals are on the mark, everything was. He was just a Nazi about it. He'd be like, "That's slightly off, let's do it again." and we're like "Nooooooo! It sounds FINE." But that's the cool thing, he's driven by what he does, so it pushes the band. Before, when we've recorded with Dan [Rathburn at Polymorph in Oakland], Dan just steps back and lets the process happen. He just tapes it and lets the band do whatever they need to. Which of course means we totally fuck it up. He's like "This is what they want to do, so I'm not going to give my opinion on it unless asked to." But Matt just naturally adds to it. He's really into what he does and just hears things. That's the sign of a good engineer. He's not someone who's too overbearing, but he has a good idea of what he wants. He'll push us to achieve what we want.

That dude's been around forever. He's kind of to blame for Tennessee hardcore because he put that record out. He's like the person who actually went to MTSU, finished, and is really stoked on being an engineer. I went, too, but failed miserably.

MRR: So you had someone that was definitely familiar with you guys using top notch equipment.

Brad: It was definitely top notch. As top notch as Pearl Jam royalties can pay for, at least! (laughs)

John: It's not like they had brass finishings or a butler that waits on you, but they had insanely nice equipment and all of their outboard gear, everything was just top notch. It's rare. I mean, we got a deal on it, too. It's not like we walked into that studio thinking, "Oh my god it's amazing" but it was a really nice studio. He knows where we're coming from. He had recorded Tragedy for a 7" so the water had already been stepped in. And it was really good to do it with a guy who knows what a hardcore record is supposed to sound like. He has Born Against and Citizen's Arrest records, so it's not like he's coming off as the guy who helped record Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, and Neil Young and all these really big bands. He *knows* what he's doing and it's really good. Because when we first started recording and were tracking, in the headphones, everything sounded like shit and we were like "Ehhhh, it sounds alright." And then we go in and hear the playback and we're like "Fuck. This sounds great!"

MRR: Earlier, when you say you were rushed with previous recording endeavors, was it in the songwriting or the recording?

Brad: A little bit of both. Whenever you leave for tour and you're like "We leave for tour and have to record a month after we leave for tour," you're kind of setting a trap for yourself. You're setting a deadline early on and then you're not going to play those songs for a month. Well, you'll play a couple of them. And then when someone forgets a song, you have to reshow them and it's kind of a bad idea. We couldn't live in Nashville—The Recording City of the World—and find a recording studio that would sound decent to us. Everybody was all digital and wanted to turn the vocals way too loud. Back then we *had* to go on tour to record. That second time, that's why we went on tour. We went to record. This time, we recorded in Seattle, which is only three hours away. We managed to spend ten days in the studio taking our time with it and it was great.

Greater Christ Temple C
NASHVILLE
TENNESSEE
KINGDOM BUILDE
Marshall

John: Everything was what we could have wanted it to be. I mean, there are small things that we're thinking "That could have been this, that could have been that," but the whole process was great. It just feels more like an album than the other two records that we did. Everyone was there, we were all in the studio and just doin' it. It works that way. I like the cover better. Working with Jade Tree has been awesome. I'm sure after all this, I'll say it's shit after the next one comes out. (Laughs)

MRR: Okay, now onto Jade Tree. Tell me how that experience was when they asked you to sign with them.

John: What was strange about it was "Why?" You ask that question, "Why From Ashes Rise?" We had been approached one time when Ron Martinez was doing A&R at Revelation. He kind of asked us and hinted around it. He would ask, "Who's doing your next record?" and we would say, "Not Revelation. Don't even think about it." Because that was around the time they had just sued Jade Tree over that Explosion record. And they had just totally ripped off all these bands. He even went as far to say, "Yeah, we've got all these punk people working here these days and it's not dodgy," but we were still like "Nah, there's just no way [we can do that]" But I thought it was hilarious that Revelation approached us because I was thinking about Gorilla Biscuits and Bold and thinking "Why would we be on that label now?"

It was just weird because that was the first time that anyone had even hinted at us going to a bigger independent. I just thought it was funny because I was thinking "Revelation? God, no." They basically shot themselves in the foot over and over again a couple of years ago.

MRR: Can I print that?

John: I don't care. Just don't make it look like I'm talking shit on Ron. He was just working for them.

MRR: You know, they might send Mike Judge knocking on your door.

John: He's probably not even in the business anymore. Revelation is sort of this weird ass entity anyway, it's this weird record label that for me, at the time was very influential and now is basically, it has no credit for me.

MRR: Kinda laughable.

John: Yeah. No, REALLY laughable. Revelation and Victory stand alone in the laughable category. Those labels just seem to surround themselves with crap.

MRR: And Jade Tree is different?

John: I think Jade Tree is different because they stayed with the ethics they've had since forever. It's just that—and I don't know if it's luck—they've put out bands that have gotten huge. That's given them the opportunity to put out bands like us or other smaller bands—just to do it. And I understand that they make a living and that they have a business and it's definitely run in a manner of a business. They have employees and other people to deal with the press/promotion, but [Darren and Tim] still have such a huge hand in it. They just have so much integrity. No matter what they put out, they're really into it. Just obsessed with those bands, which is really cool.

Brad: They pretty much just asked at a time when nobody else had asked. And then we were like, "We'll think about it. This is a big deal to us. You guys have to realize that we're putting ourselves in a really vulnerable position and a really awkward spot by saying 'Yes.' So we have to think about this for a really long time." We kind of just put it on the backburner, went to Europe, and kind of forgot about it. We were talking in Europe and then decided that we were going to do it.

MRR: What was the point where you decided?

Brad: We were in Ireland at Warzone collective. We were just sitting around before the show, talking, and it kind of turned into a serious three-hour discussion about the future. I was kind of thinking at the time that I want things to keep changing and I want to keep being excited about something. If it means taking a huge risk and doing something that might hand us a lot of criticism, I'm fine with that because at the end of the day, I know where the sincerity lies. I know that I'm not compromising anything. And so far we haven't compromised anything. At this point, if there was something to be compromised, it would have been compromised.

Everybody else felt the same way. We had the talk and I immediately went down to the computer in the place and emailed Darren. I got an email back from him a couple of days later and he was like, "Wow, we were just listening to your CD when I got your email." It was kind of spooky in that sense.

They were really excited about it. They said a lot of things that we thought, "Wow, you can hear it in the way they talk about it." It's not like they want to do it because they want that credibility within a scene or anything like that. Which is what a lot of people accuse them of and a lot of people accuse us of... well, I don't know what people accuse us for. I guess they just accuse us for doing a record on a big indie label. We get more shit from people who are concerned about our labelmates than anything else. That's just irrelevant. Pedro the Lion, Cap'n Jazz... that shit's irrelevant to me anyways. Jade Tree puts them out, but they're just kind of staying under the same roof as us. They have nothing to do with us.

John: It's weird, when Jade Tree first approached us, we were like "No way." It was very surreal. This is laughable. There's no way we could be on Jade Tree. After awhile, we thought about it and told some people. And it turned it to be something that was really cool and these guys that have their shit together. Everything seemed really fair and nobody had a harsh word to say about them—as people and in the way they ran their label. I mean, people would definitely be like, "Fuck The Promise Ring! That's shit," (laughs) but that has nothing to do with the label.

MRR: That's always funny to me because when I first heard that you guys signed to Jade Tree, it brought me back to the time I was in your van five or six years ago giving you directions and Dave [Atchison, drummer] was going off on some rant against The Promise Ring and Jade Tree!

John: Really?! (laughing) What would you be talking shit on Jade Tree about? That's funny because in Dave's room, there are—oh man, this is so fucking hilarious—this is *his* Jets to Brazil CD I'm listening to. I borrowed it. And he has *all* of that crap. All of that really poppy stuff.

MRR: But does he have The Promise Ring records?

John: Oh yeah! He definitely has Promise Ring. Quite a bit of it and in fact we listened to it not that long ago. It was coming out of his room and I was like, "Maaaaan, I'm not even going in there..."

I saw them in '97, I went to Atlanta and saw them play at the last Car vs. Driver show and I was just like, "I don't get it. This is good, but man I can't believe how much people are into this band." I think it was also around that point where Jade Tree was just massive then. Like anything they put out was just golden.

MRR: They're switching over to a harder sound now in some ways, with the Paint It Black record, rereleasing the Fury ep, and, of course, you guys.

John: Yeah, definitely. I've been listening to that Paint It Black record and it's just balls out awesome. His vocals are just amazing. I never really gave it a chance so much. We had played with them a lot and they were awesome. But I just put it in awhile ago when I was down here and thought, "This is really,really good punk" and I'm stoked that bands like that are on that label. It's not we're in this weird sea of post-punk/whatever type bands. I can give [Jade Tree] shit slightly, because I've been buying their stuff since the J Church 10" came out and still get catalogs back at my parent's house. So I've been with that label forever.

I definitely think it's a different ball game because now they're putting out Strike Anywhere who are a very poppy hardcore band and then Denali and then us, and then I guess they're doing the Cex record. They're all over the place right now. It's kind of like Alternative Tentacles.

So far, the people that we've met, like personally, the people in These Arms are Snakes, the guys in Paint it Black and Strike Anywhere are all awesome people. Before we knew them and joining this big label, I was kind of afraid what the other people would entail. It's this vastly different music scene, you don't know if people are going to be really weird by our standards.

MRR: The bands themselves? Or their fans?

John: The bands themselves. Before, we were on a label that in which we knew everybody that was connected with it. In a more DIY sense, that you knew every damn body by a certain point. And then you jump up to something like Jade Tree and you have this *huge* catalog of people—people that are involved and the people that are in bands. It was overwhelming. We were wondering "What are the people on the label with us like? Are they really cool or are they just a bunch of fuckheads in bands?" And then you meet them and of course they're awesome. This is just really cool because this is something completely different, these are people that I probably would have never met otherwise. And now I consider them friends, have toured with them and played with them. Not to sound sappy and "Unity"-like, but it's just been really cool to realize that even on a Jade Tree level, which is bigger than anything we've done, there's still a camaraderie and a coolness that goes with it.

MRR: So it was completely unexpected?

John: Yeah. We sort of first approached this as a science experiment. I mean, "Why are we going to do this? What are our reasons for doing this? Could

this possibly hurt us? What will mean as far as a change of the people we tour with? Is this because we want to get bigger? Is it because it's an opportunity that you think is cool? Is to open up people's ears? It's all of a mix... I'm going off on this really weird tangent. What was the question again?

MRR: I don't even know anymore.

John: It's definitely hard because that was another thing with Jade Tree. What does this mean? At this point, we still book our own DIY tours, like the Assault thing this summer... I know people think we suck because we did it, all who have never talked to us and/or are snobs.

MRR: What?! The Jade Tree thing or the tour with Assault?

John: Oh no! No! The Jade Tree thing! I mean, how could you hate Assault coming to the U.S.?! You'd be a fucking poseur if you were like, "I hate that From Ashes Rise drove Assault around!" (laughs) When it all comes down to it, with those people you're like, "Go start your own band, do it for for seven years, see where it takes you." Then make decisions. Then say what you're going to do and what you're not going to do. I mean, for a sixteen year old kid that's still living with his parents to make up his mind about us is fine and dandy, but he's never done it. He's never had gas spilled all over him because he had to run in the middle of rush hour traffic in Philly because other members—or myself—in the band are too damn dumb to think of putting gas in. Or having blow outs, near deaths, or being stuck in places. People who have been other bands and who have done it for a long time, I mean, I think those people have valid opinions. If you've never done anything as far as bands and stuff, then it's really weird for people to say, "Nah, you shouldn't do it." Well you've never done anything, so you don't know...

MRR: Do you think that's all going to change with Jade Tree? All the hardships of tours are going to be taken care of?

John: Well, it doesn't look like it. They don't give away money! (laughs) None of us have anything brand new, I mean we have a $600 van that we're now worried about getting going. It definitely helps because you have a label that has your back, they have invested interest in you. At this point they've invested thousands of dollars in you to put out your record that they—and we—hope that sell more than ten copies. I'm sure if we broke down, blew up our van they would probably help us out knowing that we'd pay them back. So I guess in a way there's support.

Brad: The label is just really supportive as people. Anything I need is a phone call away. I'm not saying I can call them up and say, "I need $500!" but anything we need is right there and can be handed to us. Any kind of information, any kind of resource.

MRR: When you talked to people about Jade Tree, who did you talk to? Was it mainly friends?

John: Friends and people that had dealt with them. People who told us, "Those guys still go to shows and are really involved with the Philly scene." We talked to [photographer] Chrissy Piper, who had roadied with Jets to Brazil and knows Tim and Darren very well. We asked her, "Hey, what's the deal? Are these guys really cool?" and she said, "Yeah, they're awesome. They're totally legit. Everything they do is great." We started looking at some of the bands, no matter if we liked them so much, but there's bands who do multiple records with them who seem really satisfied and happy with all the aspects of it.

MRR: Did you track down those bands and ask them, "What's your experience with Jade Tree?"

John: Well, we talked to Strike Anywhere after seeing them and said, "Hey, we're thinking of doing this thing with Jade Tree. How is it? What is your experience?" and no one said anything bad. So we're like, "Well, fuck. Obviously, they're not brainwashing these people into saying 'Jade Tree is greeeeaaat!!! We like it!!! They give us peanuts and candy!!!'"

While we were talking to people, everyone seemed to be satisfied with every aspect of them whether it comes to the recordings or just the way everything is maintained. We did a lot of asking around and it took us at least a year before we decided to be on that label. When we were sitting there looking through this contract, we were like, "What the hell is this? Is this a demon sitting in front of us? Do we have any idea what this is?" and then we realized, "No, it's just a piece of paper to make sure everything is squared away."

It was very strange because when we were asking people, I was like "Alright, who's gonna talk shit? I wanna hear some real shittalk on these guys..." and nothing ever surfaced. No red flags at all.

MRR: Were there people that immediately said, "Fuck no, don't do it?"

John: Well, yeah, there's people that said that because they thought that [Tim and Darren] had different intentions. They thought Jade Tree was just trying to ride a wave. The Next Big Thing was going to be our style of music. People thought they were just trying to cash in, thinking it's cool. That was our question, too, because we were thinking "Why the hell would Jade Tree be interested in signing us? We sound nothing like anything they've put out." But when you think about it, they put out stuff that's just completely different anyway and have from the start. But a lot of people say "They're big business. They're a huge independent record label. They have *employees*. They use computers!" People really had no idea because they were just basing it on how popular Jade Tree releases are and whatever our "crowd" would associate with Jade Tree, even though the label is really diverse. I'm sure there's people that would hate From Ashes Rise, but love, like Cub Country or Miighty Flashlight.

A lot of people in the beginning were like, "Woah, that's weird" and a lot of people said, "You're going to be alienating a lot of people." We all thought about that and it scared us because it was something that we had worked for years and years in DIY. The kids who bought our records, kept up, drove distances to see us—god forbid, some get tattoos. All of a sudden they get all purist and say "What would you do this?" even though a label like Prank, Sound Pollution, and Vermiform are all distributed through Mordam. They're all distributed through the same avenues.

Then they're like, "But you're going to appeal to a different people." Randomly in *HeartattaCk,* Lisa did a review of some band that didn't really talk about the band, but it talked about From Ashes Rise and how the signing of Jade Tree would mean that we're going to appeal to a more metal crowd. People were talking about this jump or crossover that was going to happen.

Everybody's going to have anticipations on what we do. We're going to be scrutinized. That's just really strange because "Why would they? Why would people take interest in us because of that crossover?" That's another thing, old fans of ours keep thinking that we're going to put out an emo album. Now that's just ridiculous. I don't even know how to answer that.

People were like "Don't do it," while a lot of others told us, "Why not? How would it hurt if more people hear about your band? I mean kids are going to be listening to you guys instead of some the other shitty bands out there that they have the options to buy."

I grew up in the Southern United States. There weren't record stores. So I had to go into chain stores like Camelot or Sam Goody. That's where I went to buy music—was in the mall. There was no other option. At the time, I didn't care. I didn't give two shits if my money went to Black Flag or Camelot Music or whoever. It was like "This is punk. This is awesome. I'm really excited about it and this is the place where I have to get it." I had no idea that *Maximumrocknroll* existed or that there was anything else. The only thing that I knew was punk was in *Thrasher,* all those *Sessions* ads with the t-shirts that you could buy. In some ways, I know it's sort of naive to think that kids can only go into a mall to buy this. Or stuck in the middle of nowhere. It's sort of naive to think that, "Well, they can go in and buy my music instead in a corporate chain." But then again, if you don't have those options or you can't order from the Internet, then it's cool for people to get those things in a small town. I mean, assuming that they order them, which they probably won't. But you never know, I mean, shit, it is on Jade Tree. (laughs) They move the units!

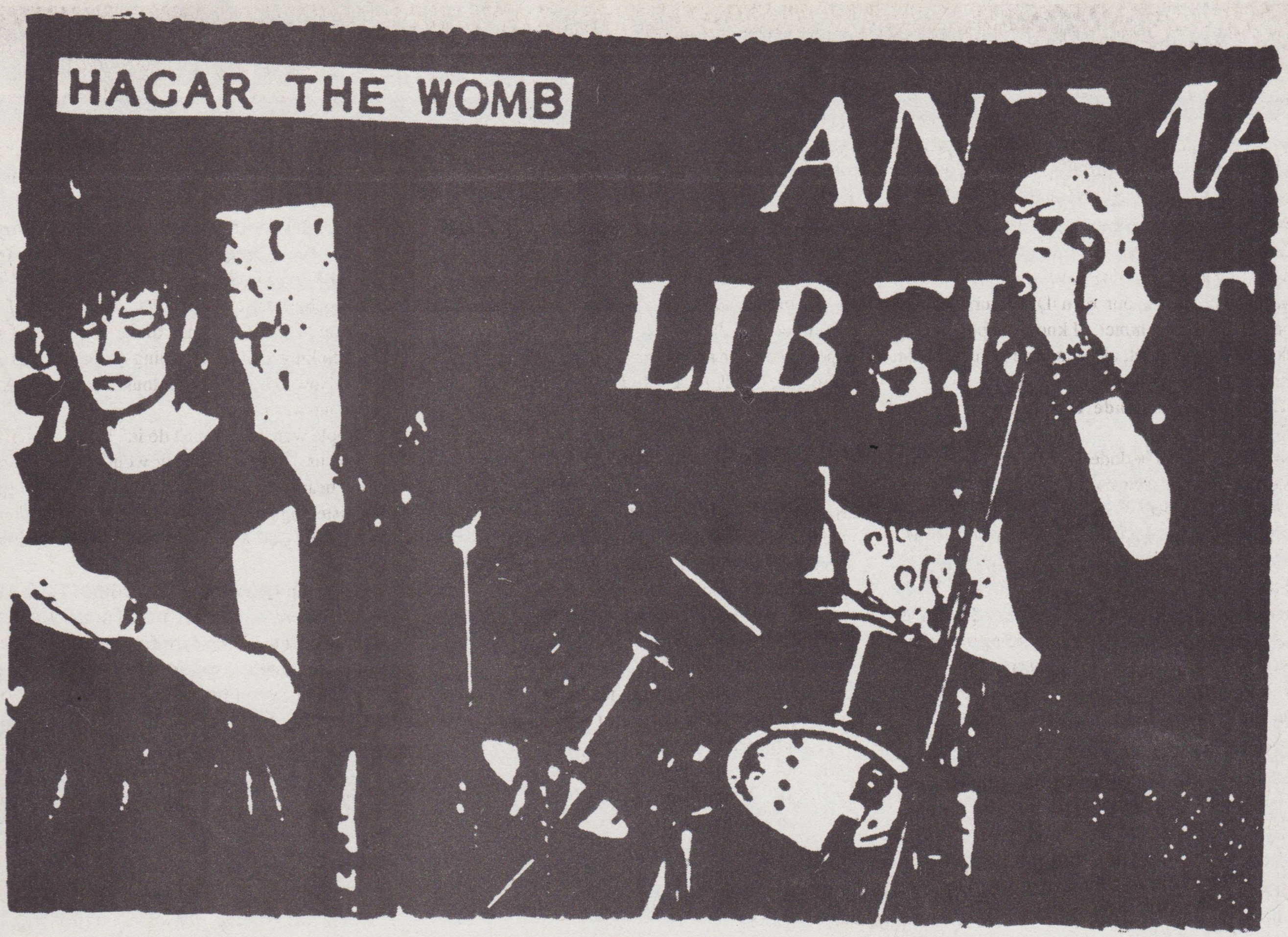
MRR: Well, then all those 13 year old girls that we were talking about earlier who are getting into punk will be going to your shows.

John: Yeah, and if they come and they hear us and hate what we have to say, then at least they had the opportunity. They'll at least have an educated opinion about us. I invite the young kids coming. I mean, if a kid can walk into Hot Topic in Des Moines, Iowa—I don't even know if they have a good record store or not—or any mall in a shitty town that doesn't have a chichi independent record store and pick up a CD by my band, it's all good.

MRR: Or a From Ashes Rise baby doll tee!

John: Oh, we won't get into that. You'll have to talk to our lawyers and our merchandisers about those. We don't want those to hit until Christmas because they'll be HOT then.

Contact: contreteandsteel@hotmail.com



REJECTION OF A LIFELESS LIFELINE — DEFECTION FROM A COLOURLESS CREED

The Story of Hagar The Womb

By Lance Hahn

Hagar the Womb, the band, the troupe, were anarcho-punk's response to the many who thought of the scene as humorless and stiflingly stoic. With humor and a somewhat casual approach to the "band" concept, they were as much the mascots of the London punk scene as they were active agitators.

Founding member, Ruth Elias: "We never set off trying to achieve anything than show those meany boys at the Anarchy Centre (hello Bill now famous DJ, respect!) that we could do a gig with a week's notice. And we achieved that with lots of fumbling, mumbling, and bribery, and honestly never expected more. There was no game plan."

Ruth came to punk rock in the way most people at the time did: from seeing it on television.

"Through *Top of the Pops*— the Pistols and the Buzzcocks, and then the Stranglers," she said. "And then the other strands started emerging; I gave Oi! the widest berth. But someone bought a Crass LP around, which blew me away. I had to turn it down to stop my mum hearing all the swearing."

Early guitarist Jon Attwood came across punk in a similar manner.

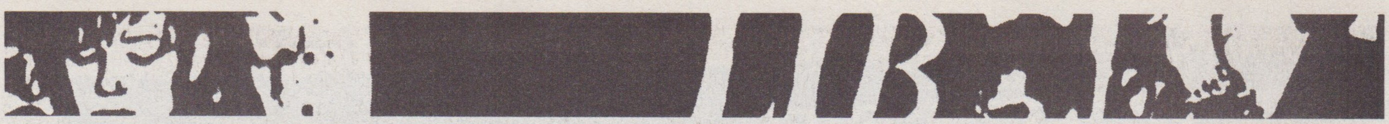
Jon: "First I heard of punk was my sister getting a copy of "God Save The Queen" in '77, which made a real impression on me. It was the energy and apparent simplicity of it that made such an impression. I was 13 or 14 at the time and had been into T-Rex, Bowie, etc. At first, I only heard the commercial stuff from Radio 1, *Top Of The Pops*, etc. (Pistols, Adverts, Generation X, Buzzcocks, etc.), then started listening to Peel and hearing Subway Sect, Slits, the Banshees.

"The anarcho thing was quite a few years later. I'd heard Crass (I traded my Clash album for *The Feeding of the 5000*) and was impressed with the records and their attitude. The connection really came about thru my friend's band Cold War playing in Southend with the Apostles and Sinyx, who told us about the Anarchy Centre. It had only just opened, it was the first gig, and we just went along to hang out and meet people."

It was the Wapping Anarchy Centre toilet that future Hagars met and the band was born.

Ruth: "We mostly met at Kingsway College, some doing a secretarial course, who shall remain nameless, and others doing far more trendy things. The great ginger man Todd told us about Wapping in the canteen and we headed to the same that very Sunday, gave it a whirl and never looked back. We formed in the toilets, a traditional meeting place for women at Wapping, 'cos we were sick of being ignored by the right-on PC men there who were busy taking control and excluding us. Maybe they didn't intend to, but you can't be too careful."

At the start, most of the band had zero experience playing any instrument.



Ruth: "No. We never really started playing music; it was forced upon us. We had a massive learning curve, as most of us had never picked up instruments before and were reluctant to do so, I can remember. As we got better at them we just progressed, I suppose. Never get the impression we started out knowing how to do things!"

Jon: "The band formed from a few people who knew each other (Ruth, Karen, Stephanie, Janet, Nicola) and others they met thru the Wapping A-Centre. The original plan was to be an all-girl band but they couldn't find a girl drummer, so they got a guy called Scarecrow/Rich in who wore a kilt. They did a few gigs in this line-up, mainly at the A-Centre. After a few months they asked Chris [Knowles, also of Cold War] to join on drums. They then asked me to play lead guitar. Mitch we also knew from the A-Centre and Paul, who replaced me, was in Chris's other band, Cold War."

Jon brought to the band some degree of experience though his own playing was born out of punk's DIY attitude.

Jon: "I'd never had any interest in playing music until punk. It was partly the attitude of 'anyone can do it' that got me started with my first guitar. Once I'd learnt a few chords, I started playing with people from school and writing songs."

He, as well as Chris from Cold War, brought a bit of experience with live performance.

Jon: "I played in a few bands at school, then joined a local punk band, the Screaming Babies from Hornchurch, not long before Hagar the Womb, so I was in both of them at the same time. The Screaming Babies were very influenced by The Damned and later gothic and post-punk stuff like UK Decay, Bauhaus, Joy Division, Theatre of Hate, Southern Death Cult, etc."

Ruth came up with the name, much to her chagrin.

Ruth: "It's a pretty abstract religious reference for a band name. I did and I have always hated saying it and have always lived to regret it and will die doing so. I was so surprised that it was adopted, as it was the crappiest suggestion I have ever made, in fun and in peacetime! It means nothing; people make their own references for it."

Jon: "The name was there before I joined. But it's a biblical reference to an enslaved woman. I'm not that familiar with the bible so don't know the details that well, but I think the story was that Abraham had a barren wife, Sarah, and a slave, Hagar, who was his concubine. It was a sort of feminist statement about women being used for their reproductive capabilities. A lot of people related it to the Hagar the Horrible cartoons!"

The mixed references would be appropriate, as the band's early set ranged from capitol "P" politics to unexpurgated silliness.

Ruth: "Unfortunately "Puff the Magic Dragon" ("who lives by the sea, he didn't have a lot to do but he believed in anarchyyyyyyy") never made it to disc but others did like "Babies" and "Dressed to Kill" and, wince, "Cardboard Theatre:"

You were nurtured in a cardboard theatre
A great platform of parental care
Mummy and Daddy your central props
Waiting for the day their wisdom would be shared
They supported you their only "puppet"
Pulled your strings to suit their way
Until one time on that stage
You found you could repeat what they did say
In a cardboard theatre lies all decadent imagery
In a cardboard theatre there exists no liberty

But beneath the fun-loving attitude there was serious music being made, with members getting more and more adept at their instruments.

Jon: "The inspirations were a bit different across the band. The original line-up was inspired by the anarcho scene (Crass, Poison Girls, Mob, Rubella Ballet, Subhumans, Flux, etc.) but also punk in general. Chris made the biggest difference to the sound, being into Wire, PiL, Banshees, the Cure, etc., followed by Mitch, with his more funky bass style."

As was the nature of the times, the band members donned stage names more humorous than spikey and punk rock. Names like Ruth Radish, Janetti Spaghetti, Chris Elephant Face, and Jon from Bromley.

Ruth: "Sheer exuberant youthfulness, I'd say. Incidentally, Steph was TOSPP. I know what it means but many don't and I dare say Steph might have forgotten by now, and stopped wincing."

Early gigs were chaotic affairs, with the band slowly evolving in front of the Wapping audience.

Ruth, "Gigs were anarchic, i.e., chaotic. Small stages, mostly mates in other bands crowding round, very homemade and cozy. The big bands were little bands then, though some were littler than others. I do remember Crass playing as a smaller band at Wapping, though I also remember we all coveted the kettle after someone from Crass had touched it. We must've known Crass would be a big cheese!!!!"

Jon: "The first few gigs before Chris and I joined were very shambolic with the band getting drunk—nerves!?—and being very un-together. Chris made a big difference, as he could drum with his hands and feet at the same time! This pulled things together a lot and it started to tighten up. The first gig was at the A-Centre with Zounds, the Mob, Null and Void, the Apostles and Luz y Fuerza. I remember the bill, as I recorded the whole gig. There were a few gigs with the Apostles and then we did a lot with Conflict and also the Mob. There was also one at the 100 Club with Poison Girls and Benjamin Zephaniah in '83."

Through the band's involvement with the Wapping A-Centre, the group's political leanings seemed obvious, though perhaps an organized political agenda took a backseat to the concept of learning how to play.

Jon: "The band met through and started within the anarcho-punk scene and so was always associated with it. The original members of the band were learning to play while they were gigging. Apart from a few refinements and mastery of instruments, not a lot changed over the time I was in the band."

But even when it got down to writing, the overall mood was "fun," more so than the brooding post-apocalyptic glare of most bands at the time.

Ruth, "Well, therein lies the rub. We weren't very political, 'cos we felt there were enough angry bands out there and they all looked and sounded the same. When people asked us about our politics in interviews at the time, we'd just chorus "The youth on the street are angry!" and fall about laughing. Oh, we had fun. Our politics were with a small "p" and we wrote mostly about things that were in our face, like the way people change if they think you're a deal, and getting on the slap to go out for the night, and rape and wars and animal cruelty as well; we weren't totally frivolous!"

Jon, "I think we were part of the scene because we were there at the time but, like a lot of the other bands around, not all the members had the same political views. I always felt the band was more about personal politics rather than government/society politics."

The center itself was more of a social scene in some ways.

Ruth, "It was just like a club, people knew each other and were friendly or not so. I can't remember much that was anarcho about it apart from the 'anyone can do it' spirit, just the usual bits of one upmanship, competition, deals, excess alcohol consumption, and gen-

"No. We never really started playing music, it was forced upon us."
-Ruth Elias

eral substance misuse. Oh, and everyone seemed to go out with each other and break up and go out with someone else, just like in school. And in the middle of it all, Ivan Oxo from the Assassins of Hope would clean up the Anarchy Centre. He was famous for doing this and had a song dedicated to him: 'Who works at the DHSS? Ivan Oxo! Who clears up the anarchy centre after everyone has left and gone home? Ivan Oxo!' It even had a tune."

Jon, "It seemed a bit of both, plus a bit of (anti?) fashion as well. It was also an alternative: punk had split into a few seemingly mutually exclusive factions, with the Exploited/Anti-Pasti/Vice Squad, etc., being one, the Gary Bushell-promoted Oi! as another, and anarcho-punk, which seemed musically more adventurous and less commercially oriented. Though I have to admit that I liked and disliked bands from all three."

But through that, the band found camaraderie with certain other bands also involved with Wapping.

Jon, "A lot of the bands we were close to because we knew each other thru the A-Centre (Apostles, Assassins of Hope, Part 1). It started off for Hagar as a very friendly thing, based around the A-Centre, quite a small number of people who all knew each other and a lot were in bands. The bands weren't closely related musically but more in their outlook and ideals."

Despite the jovial nature of much of the band's material, there were still underlying feelings that they were perhaps brushed off for being women and, as a result, not subject to the same critique and praise as other bands.

Ruth: "I mean, there always are, but were there tangible effects on the band? There was some marginalizing. We weren't taken very seriously, but that might have something to do with the fact that we were not taking ourselves very seriously either. I do remember bands we played with didn't like us to headline, maybe 'cos we were mostly women or maybe 'cos they genuinely felt they should, hard to tell. We just went our own merry way and didn't change anything about ourselves; boobtubes, eyeliner, hairspray, and our stage dancers all remained intact!"

But the members were music fans. The music wasn't a complete whimsy and they did have roots and influences.

Ruth, "Everyone liked different bands, so I can't speak for all, though Mitch would probably kill me if I didn't mention the Mekons. I was mostly listening to UK Decay, the Wall, Crisis and Boney M when we started and progressed to, well, the Modettes and Dirt. I couldn't fault them though plenty of others seemed to."

Having played around for a few months, the group was approached by Colin from Conflict to record for his still relatively new Mortarhate Records. There had been earlier attempts at committing the music to tape. But this was the first organized recording for release as a cassette LP.

Jon: "There were a couple of recording sessions, some of rehearsals at the basement club in Covent Garden, and eventually the recordings for a proposed cassette album for Mortarhate, which we recorded with Pete Fender at Xntrix studios (the Poison Girls' basement). The line-up for this session was: Ruth/Karen (vocals), Stephanie (bass), Janet (guitar), Chris (drums), Jon (guitar). As part of this session, we also recorded a version of Gary Glitter's "Rock and Roll" with members of Poison Girls, Rubella Ballet, and Conflict on vocals. A similar line-up, with Mitch Flacko on bass, rerecorded all the tracks for the album at a studio in Notting Hill. I'd left the band by this time but went in for a day to do guitars. I think this session was either scrapped or the lead guitar parts redone by Paul Harding, my replacement. There were also loads of live tapes about. I recorded their first few gigs."

Ruth: "It came to pass that Colin paid for us to go do it and even joined us on backing vocals for "Rock and Roll." That's probably why it came to pass that it was never released."

The recording never did get released, mostly for reasons unknown ("I don't know of its whereabouts, probably in Colin's garage!" says Ruth). It did, however, give them the chance to do a proper recording with Pete Fender (Omega Tribe, Rubella Ballet, etc.), who was recording most of the anarcho bands that Crass wasn't.

Ruth: "He played with us a few times as well. He was a true pro. I am surprised he didn't leave the room, venue, etc., in disgust."

Jon: "The early recordings were fun but a bit stressful. Our first bass player left after the Xntrix recordings, as it showed up in the studio that a lot of the guitar and bass parts didn't fit with each other and it ended up being the bass parts that all got changed! It was good fun, though, having the six of us in the studio and members of Poison Girls, Rubella Ballet, Conflict, etc., dropping by."

By the time of the recording for Mortarhate, Jon had left the band.

Jon: "The main reason was getting married and moving to Milton Keynes. I kind of justified it to myself and others that I wasn't that into the music but thinking back, we'd just started getting to the stage of putting new material together that was much stronger and the music was coming from Chris and Mitch. "Idolization" and "M.I.F." were done just before I left. And the reaction at gigs was getting better. I guess the band was getting better all the time when I quit."

Since they didn't have time to find someone new, he was happy to play on the recordings.

Jon, "By the time of the recordings in Notting Hill, I'd left the band and turned up to just add my guitar tracks to already finished songs. I didn't see the rest of the band so it was like being a session musician."

Despite all this, none of the recordings that Jon played on were released, save one compilation track. What would have been their debut LP for Mortarhate was shelved.

Jon, "I think the majority of the songs that we were playing when I was in the band were never released. The tracks on the Xntrix session included: "Routine," "Babies," "Polluted Ideals," "Cardboard Theatre," "Fight Back," "Silent Minority," "Friends," "Armchair Observer," and "Dressed To Kill." Only one song I played on ever got released, "Polluted Ideals" on *Who, What, Why, Where, When?* on Mortarhate."

Jon's departure from Hagar the Womb left a void that could only be filled by someone from the same scene who understood the delicate band vibe of humor and politics mixed with the fairly specific musical interests. They were lucky in the availability of Paul Harding.

Paul: "I think that I probably heard about punk from all the media hype surrounding the Sex Pistols and from friends. Punk completely changed the course of my whole life. It was far more than a mere fashion statement; this was music that anybody could play. I was drawn to the positive attitude surrounding punk, the idea of creating something from nothing, to escape the boredom of the Suburbs of late 70's London. When we first heard about punk, me and my friends were too young to go to gigs—I mean, I was 12 in 1977!—but that didn't stop us from going up by tube to the Rough Trade shop just to look around, as well as to buy records. The one redeeming feature of Hornchurch, the suburb of London where I grew up, was that it is on the edge of the tube network. The John Peel Show was just about the only place on the radio where you could hear any of this music at the time. Not only did he play some excellent records but the show was also an invaluable source of information and inspiration. Best of all was that we had discovered that the security at the Hammersmith Palais and also the Lyceum in the Strand would often turn a blind eye

to under 18s, so by the time I was 15, I had seen bands like The Damned, the Ruts, and Siouxsie and the Banshees.

"The impact of punk was so great that I was already learning to play guitar, as were a bunch of my friends. In my neighborhood there was like seven or eight of us learning to play instruments as a direct response to punk. Eventually after various bedroom bands, three guitarists and a drummer playing cardboard boxes, that type of thing, our first proper band was formed, called Cold War. Our bass player was Chris, who was later to become the Hagar drummer. He lived in the same street as me. The drummer was Kev Antfood and Ian was our singer. At this stage, we had a drummer with almost a full drum kit, my cheap'n'nasty guitar, a bass that was okay-ish and a singer that looked and sounded good. I can still remember our first gig quite clearly; I was 16 years old at the time, the others all about that age, too. We traveled by train to Cliff's Pavilion in Southend-on-sea with our guitars and drumsticks. There was a load of bands all playing short sets but using the same amps and drum kit. This suited us down to the ground 'cos we didn't have any money to buy these things and even if we did, we couldn't get them anywhere, as we were too young to drive. I remember when it was our turn to go on stage, I was so nervous that I could barely plug my guitar in, then after a count in from the drummer I had to play the first few notes of the intro to the first song. I switched on my fuzz box and suddenly my guitar blasted out from the PA. I could hear the sound of my guitar echoing back through the venue louder than I had ever heard it before, it sounded so powerful. The feeling was truly fantastic! People actually clapped after the first song finished, I couldn't believe it! This was so encouraging that the next song was even better than the first. 15 minutes later the gig was over, we felt triumphant, jubilant and sweaty; my life was never going to be the same again."

Through the supportive network punk rock was still formulating at the time, Cold War got connected with the Wapping Anarchy Centre and eventually the members of Hagar.

Paul: "On the train back from the first Cold War gig we met some people who told us about the Anarchy Centre where there was gigs on Sunday nights that bands like us could get to play. This was just what we needed to hear. A week or two later, we played at the Anarchy Centre and from this more gigs followed on. It was there that we met the people who were to become Hagar. The band was actually formed one evening at the Anarchy Centre, I seem to remember. You need to ask Ruth about this to be sure. Their original guitarist, Jon Attwood, was a fellow Hornchurch boy and Hagar drummer Chris was also the bass player in Cold War. He used to say that he always wanted to play drums as well, so here was the perfect opportunity for him to do so!

"The year must have been either late '81 or early '82. I remember seeing one of the early Hagar gigs and thinking that it was crap, a complete shambles, yet at the same time they had a certain something. They were very spirited and had that exuberance and excitement that so many bands lack."

Having already made a few connections on and off the road through Cold War, it was natural for Paul to join with Jon's blessing.

Paul: "No, Jon left on amicable terms. I even remember him showing me how to play some of the songs. The cassette! It's all coming back to me now! Shit! How do you know about this? I think some of the songs were from the cassette and there were some new songs, too. Eventually, Cold War split up and Chris and myself carried on in HTW."

Paul was introduced to the London anarcho scene through the band.

Paul: "I especially liked the Mob, Lack Of Knowledge, and Flowers in the Dustbin. I suppose we were connected to Conflict through the record and some of the gigs, but musically we were worlds apart."

Without the cassette album ever being officially released on Mortarhate, the group set out releasing tapes on their own making connections through the various anarcho-punk scenes popping up around England. The scene was spurred on by a growing fanzine network.

Ruth: "We did our own tapes and sent them to people. If anyone did anything else, please step forward."

By this time, the band were playing more and more gigs often under the supervision of Colin and Conflict.

Ruth: "We loved Decadent Few (ex-Youthinasia) and Look Mummy Clowns (ex-Erratics) and did a lot of gigs together. They were other bands on the scene who were different, had a good sense of themselves and a good sense of the ridiculous. Our first gig was with the Mob and Zounds and they were sterling efforts as well. Conflict people were a laugh, though Colin was a bit dodgy if always up for it. Other bands we were not great mates with at the time but are now, like Dirt and Rubella Ballet. It's this weird thing about being like family, that's what it feels like when you meet up now, however you got on with each other way back when."

Paul: "We played with Conflict quite a bit but never with Crass. Just before I joined them Hagar played with Conflict at the Brixton Ace. This was a landmark gig for the band, despite my not being there! Quite soon after I joined HTW, Conflict played the Ace again, about an 800-capacity venue, I guess, and we played with them again. Wicked gig, though! I loved it. Big stage to dance around on, stage invaded by dancers, the set went down well with the crowd, a near perfect gig! The shambolic nature of the band seemed to transfer well to bigger stages, probably 'cos there was about seven of us in the band to start with. Sometimes there was even more, 'cos we often had a few more people dancing on the stage with us for the whole gig. We used to like this anyway. At this stage we never had any backline equipment other than my guitar amp, which sometimes made it to gigs, sometimes not. I remember playing tons of gigs with other bands' amps, this I didn't really mind, as it saved me from having to carry one around. In about '77 or '78, I read an interview with the Banshees and they said that they used to turn up at gigs and pretend that their non-existent van had broken down on the way to the gig. This justified borrowing their support bands equipment for the gig 'cos they had none of their own. Well, I'm afraid to say that this was us, too, on more than one occasion, though we weren't always so deceitful about it.

"We played at a punk all-dayer in Leeds with Black Flag headlining on their first visit to the UK. This was a really good gig, though we didn't care much for Black Flag at the time. They kind of sounded more like a heavy rock version of the Stooges to us.

"At an early gig at the Moonlight in Hampstead I remember that Chris wasn't let in, because he didn't look 18! After pleading with the manager "I'm in the band!" he was finally allowed in."

But the bands sense of humor didn't always go down well with some of the more stoic of the black-clad punk bands.

Ruth, "Some they liked us, some they liked us not very much, and some they liked us not at all, but we never got to see them, 'cos they were no-shows at our shows! We did occasionally cross angry men in black. They laughed at us for not wearing black and we laughed at them for doing so. I'm sure it was all deeper at the time, but that's my recollection on a Wednesday afternoon at work."

With the unreleased cassette now forgotten about, the band decided to go ahead and record a 12" for Mortarhate.

Ruth: "We did our first 12" with Mortarhate, 'cos Colin said we could

have our own badges if we did. There, that is how simple it is, folks, or how simple we were folks! Dunno about the cassette, it wasn't really mentioned. Colin's mum's probably chucked it out of his garage by now."

With their fun-loving and approachable attitude, the Hagars went into the studio and came out with one of if not the most upbeat record in the entire Mortarhate catalog. *The Word of the Womb* was a six-song 12" of catchy punk rock, almost reminiscent of the Shop Assistants and certainly anticipated bands like Dan and Joyce McKinney Experience.

Ruth: "Can't remember much at all except that it was hot inside and out. It probably was our first time in a studio, we had to be told and shown a lot.

"As a singer, ha ha, I was outraged that we weren't introduced to the echo machine and our vocals were unembellished for all to hear. Otherwise I think we acquitted ourselves quite well, considering the crumbling ruin we made of live performances."

Paul: "I was proud of the record and the songs, looking back, I wish we could have spent more time in the studio, though.

"The record was recorded quite quickly, with very few overdubs and not enough pizza to eat. It wasn't my first time in the studio as Cold War had been in the studio before recording demos."

The record leads off with the engaging "Idolization:"

You're in fashion
You talk sense today
I listen to you
I will speak the new way
Forget my past
Please wipe it all away
This one's for real
My new views won't stray

Despite the self-deprecating reviews by Ruth, the record is quite catchy and immediate in a way congruent to records of the time. They were also the result of many different songwriters in the group.

Ruth: "Janet and I did "Dressed to Kill" on the 253 bus coming back from school, I did "Idolization," Chris did "A Song of Deep Hate" or was that on the next one? Help!!! We all mucked in is the simple answer. Ideas came mostly from incidents."

Paul: "Killing Joke, PIL, Bauhaus, UK Decay, the Mob, Couldn't say if they influenced the songwriting at all."

With all the fun and games, the chance to make a point with the lyrics was not lost.

You accept religion
You think it's the truth
But how do you know?
Where is the proof?
Rules made by man
To keep you in hand
To control the land

Despite such polemics, the band were still in a position to have fun, even if it meant a little distance between them and their audience.

Paul: "Personally I found it hilarious, entertaining, educational, optimistic, but in a good way, and at times infuriatingly naive. What was really good about punk was that there would be gigs organized by people who just liked the music and didn't work in the music business. So there were lots of one-off gigs organized in venues in places such as village halls, sports halls, civic centres, social clubs, and so on. We used to enjoy ourselves first and foremost. We were sick of bands that were so fucking serious on stage yet would be laughing and joking backstage, what hypocrites. HTW lyrics were pretty serious stuff overall, yet the band's presentation wasn't. The world might have been shit but that wasn't going to stop us from having a good time. There were lots of people who failed to see the humor in bands like Crass and Flux."

In many ways, the record cover summed up the band and their niche in the anarcho-punk scene: a child-like drawing of a giraffe with an anarchy symbol is being ridden by a bear wearing a Hagar the Womb t-shirt is printed in stark black and yellow. Flip the record over and another bear in combat boots follows scooping up the giraffe's shit. Below the bear is a small turtle with a mohawk.

Ruth: "Tony D of, anyone remember Kill Your Pet Puppy? And less likely, Windy Miller and the Windmills? Tony did the giraffe on *WOTW* modeled on one on my bedroom wall at the time, and Asa did *Funnery*, and we are forever indebted."

To an audience still hungry for records relating to the scenes around Crass, the Mob, and Conflict, the record met a positive reception.

Paul, "Fine, I think. Not that we were bothered about things like that. We were never everyone's favorite, 'cos there was a poppier side to the band. What was interesting and amazing was that John Peel really picked up on the record and played it loads. This was great for us, because people outside of the anarcho scene were getting into the band. People who would never buy, say, a Crass record, could hear what we had to say."

As is the time-tested tradition, with the record out, the Hagars hit the road.

Ruth: "We toured all over the UK and the continent as well. It is my lasting regret we never did the states, to influence the likes of Operation Ivy and Minor Threat in the making. But hey, they didn't do too badly. Dunno about punk scenes out of London; we just went out of a van, into a venue, and back in the van again via a chippie. In between, people jumped about and looked like they were enjoying themselves. I don't think Liverpool has a scene, I can't remember going there with the Hags, but I did with Dirt and there was not a punky-looking person in the venue. And that's not a reflection on Dirt before you think it, they were a sterling effort!"

Paul: "We did more one-offs than tours, 'cos there were so many people in the band, it was a organizational nightmare just to rehearse, let alone tour! We used to play places like Leeds quite a lot, South Wales, also did some but not all dates on a Conflict tour or two. We did go on tour in Holland once, though. This was okay, 'cos once everyone was together and out of the UK the organizing was much easier.

"The anarcho scene outside London was quite varied, stronger in some places than others. Many of the punks who would go to anarcho gigs would go to other types of gigs, too. There was a strong crossover between the different punk/post-punk scenes. Very occasionally, in later days, we would get all these glue-sniffing types at anarcho gigs, too, which was a bit of a problem. Yuck! I can still remember that smell."

In 1985, the band had a final falling out with Colin, resulting in the band leaving Mortarhate.

Ruth: "Colin ripped us off over a John Peel session, pretending to be our manager and pocketing the proceedings so things got a bit 'estranged.' Abstract came forward, mostly 'cos of Mitch's love affair with the Mekons and the Three Johns who were on said label."

Paul: "Abstract were the label that the Three Johns were on, who were friends of Mitch, our bassist. The label was more of a regular sort of record label.

"I could say lots about Mortarhate and Conflict but it would all be libelous, certainly wouldn't look good in your book."

The second and final recording of Hagar the Womb was the 12" *Funnery In A Nunnery*. Five songs with a cleaner, though no less energetic delivery, starting with "One Bright Spark:"

We're so happy in the midst of all this sadness
One sane voice in a sea of madness
One sign of hope amongst the prophets of doom

One bright spark in a darkened room

The record was in many ways more unique. Its content was more personal and the band were certainly more together than previously.

Ruth: "We were more ourselves, I say frivolous, and less 'anarcho-punk,' a term we had never defined ourselves as, being fiercely anti-label, 'cos labels restrict, but which others were happy to give us to slot us in somewhere and try and make sense of us and their enjoyment of us."

Paul: "Musically, bits were from all of us. If I had to summarize HTW lyrics then I would have to say they tend to concern themselves more with personal politics rather than singing about 'smashing the system' and all those other clichés. Songs would be about how people didn't have to live their lives doing boring jobs, that you didn't have to take what you were given in society, that there was a better life out there for you."

If nothing else, the title and the cover, another childlike drawing of the band playing to a room of dancing nuns, was a welcome sign that even with the new label, they were the same fun band.

Ruth: "I don't know if the title came before the cover or the cover before the title, but they definitely influenced each other. It means nothing but it rhymes."

By the end of that year, however, the band was beginning to fall apart. Paul was frustrated that they hadn't toured more, and eventually he and Chris left to start We Are Going To Eat You. With those key members gone, Hagar the Womb carried on for a few more years. But they never did record again.

Ruth: "We kept going for ages with different line-up changes after Chris and Paul left to set up a new band with Chris's girlfriend. It got to one line up change too many and we gave up ghost, as they say in the north. Could never ever find a good female drummer, incidentally!"

Chris and Paul went on to have some success with We Are Going To Eat You, which featured four members of Hagar. One highlight was a great pop record on All The Madmen (the label founded by the Mob).

Paul: "By this time, 1986-87, I'm not sure how much of an anarcho scene there really was left, so I can't say if we were part of it. The scene had started to become a caricature of itself, bands preaching to the converted, spouting what had become the same old clichés, which to us was exactly the opposite of what punk was meant to be about.

"As a complete reaction to the punky stuff, this record is quite poppy, even has jangly guitars on it too. WAGTEY singer Julie's vocal style was completely different from HTW. This wasn't a punk record."

Both he and Chris have had much success with dance and techno music. Both have carried the ethics they learned from punk into the rave/free party scene. As a result, they are putting their original principles into a form more creative than most of the rest of their peers.

Paul: "After leaving WAGTEY, I engineered at Southern Studios for a couple of years. I loved doing this and working with other bands on their music.

"Eventually I wanted to make my own music again and for the last eight years, I've been making lots of hard trance and techno records. I still run some record labels with Chris who was in Hagar/WAGTEY. For us, the dance music explosion was just like punk with a different beat. So the old ideas move forwards and onwards. Once again, it was all about ideas not musical proficiency; only this time with samplers not guitars. Surely samplers are the punk rock instrument of all time, if only they had been invented ten years earlier? By the early- to mid-1990s, the most political act of protest that there could be was to have a large free party; politics and music had come together again. Many of the people on the free party scene were those originally from the anarcho crowd. Instead of putting on a punk-rock gig, they were now organizing a dance party in a disused warehouse or field somewhere. Laws were passed to try to ban these parties. The protests against them were causing major rioting in London.

"With dance records you can be quite anonymous, another old anarcho idea, and release records under lots of different artist names. So I've either made or released about a hundred times the records I did when I played in bands."

Previous guitar player, Jon, has also continued to play music also in a new and different direction.

Jon: "I didn't play at all for a couple of years, then drifted back into it and did some stuff around Milton Keynes with a variety of goth-influenced bands (Banshees meets All About Eve!?), then some acoustic stuff, before finally starting solo recordings in an ambient/post-rock/electronica vein as Yellow 6, which I'm still doing now."

Despite what some thought was a lackadaisical attitude towards the anarcho underground of the time, the former members of Hagar remain committed people with few regrets.

Jon: "It was great at the time: partly the feeling of being involved in something, musically rather than politically on my part, and just enjoying playing in a band and going to loads of gigs, meeting people, etc. There was also no great ambition that I remember. We were happy to do gigs and maybe release a tape or something but weren't bothered about big success.

"I just remember it all being good fun at the time. There used to be up to ten or so of us would go to the A-Centre from Hornchurch every week, which was good. That's where I got my alternative name, Jon from Bromley, on one of those trips. Nothing really sticks in my mind as being really special. Above everything else, though, I remember playing my last official gig with the band at the Brixton Ace and the stage getting invaded."

Paul: "Looking back, I have mostly happy memories of the bands. I'm proud of all the records we made and the gigs we played. I hope people enjoyed seeing us and it would be nice to think that the songs meant something to some people. Originally, I guess we just wanted to either make people think for themselves, live their own lives, and, most importantly, we wanted to act as an inspiration. If Hagar could get up on stage and do it then so could anybody! Later with WAGTEY, I just wanted to keep on playing and writing and be able to make a living out of doing so, just because I loved it so much.

"Some of the ideas were naive, others very important. You can change your life for the better, we did. So in that way, punk was empowering and really did change my life. The idea of being independent from the music biz, in the way the anarcho scene was and is, is still vitally important to me."

Ruth: "I think what we all went through, listened to, and did has left its mark on us, and that mark has been a positive benchmark for the future, or the now as I write. I may have been flippant about the time earlier in these questions but it's certainly influenced me and my outlook right up to now, though it's harder to say what was already there before the scene set in. The time also coincided with other notables, such as the can't-pay-won't-pay campaigns, which weren't led by the anarcho movement but were definitely in keeping with the spirit of things as we saw them."

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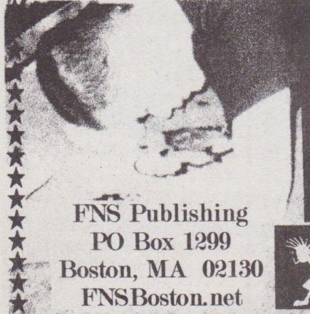

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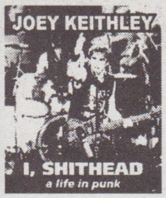

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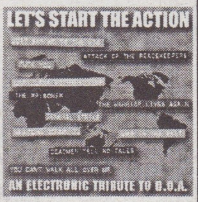

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MRR: How did your band get together and start playing shows?
Annie: Annie and Todd meet at party. Will sees Annie in Nar shirt. Todd and Annie start playing music, but need drummer. Todd and Annie remember Will and ask him to play. Will remembers Nar shirt. Band ensues.
Will: I knew Todd from a band that I had played in previously, and I was a fan of Annie's old band, AMBITION MISSION. I ran into Todd at a gathering and he proposed the idea of us three playing together. I was hesitant, because I was already in a few bands. Alas, after listening to a tape of the songs they had written, and getting to know them better as people, I had a hard time saying no.
MRR: What are your priorities with being in a band? How does your band relate to your personal, political, or artistic goals? What does being in this band mean to you?
Todd: My personal goals and political outlook are intertwined, because the current political and corporate landscape affects all of us, and it affects the vast majority of people negatively. In that way, politics are a big part of our band. Artistically, I just hope we're good. We're trying to keep the bad art contained primarily in the galleries around Union Square and festivals in Berkeley. I'm not saying we're succeeding, just that we're trying.
Annie: The personal is political. Artistry is political. You can't be involved with anything whole-heartedly and not be affected by the politics around us. This world, this country, and this city are fucked up. This band is my outlet for venting my frustrations about it. If I didn't have it as a safety valve, I would die from lack of sleep.
Will: My priorities for making music are to make it good and make it honest. I don't know how to put that into words, except that I just do what feels right. I want to be in a band that I would want to listen to, and I want it to be something I am proud of, not half-ass it. As far as goals, I don't know that I have any, although it might be nice to.

Basically, the band is one of the few steady things in my life that I feel good about. I only know that I want to keep doing it, as long as everyone seems motivated.
MRR: Do you consider yourselves relatively successful? Do you ever think of your band in terms of success?
Will: It's hard to not think about "success", but usually I just end up with a hollow and sad version of what success is. In fair terms, success for us could be defined as if we and our audience are affected by the band. As far as I can tell, people seem to appreciate what we're doing. So in that way, we are successful.
Annie: I consider us very successful. We really enjoy the time we spend with each other and the music we create. Those are the only terms of success I can think of when it comes to playing music. I wouldn't care if we only put out one song, it would still mean as much to me as long as we had loved it.
MRR: What do you think of the state of independent music and punk

rock? How has it changed since you started being involved? Have these changes affected the way you approach playing music now?

Todd: We played with a band in Chico a while back that, by all means of interpretation, was post-BLINK 182. Meaning that I believe they were their beginning reference point for punk rock and their ultimate goal as far as aesthetic. That seems very common. This was not possible before BLINK182 or like bands existed and thrived by the methods they do. It's not interesting to me in the least, but it's not a big deal. A genre will naturally continue to be re-invented as time goes on, I just hope for re-inventions that don't take place on stages propped up by Microsoft and Clear Channel. Personally, I like playing in basements.

Annie: People keep freaking out about "punk" being encroached upon by major labels. But really, would you listen to Good Charlotte anyway? I mean, that shit is totally vacant and sucks ass to boot. The underground is just as strong as it always has been. It will never be quelled. There will always be folks putting on basement shows, doing their own recordings, making their own clothes. It's fantastic when you think about the network the underground punk scene has created. Everybody knows each other. However, there will also always be those trying to capitalize on and rape punk culture. Let them try; they'll never "get it" and will always fail to get to the heart.

I have the same approach to making music as I did when I was a teenager: play with people you like, stay away from major labels, don't compromise your beliefs, and feel good about the choices you make as a band.

Will: There is a lot of garbage out there, and that is the stuff that inspires me to try to do a better job. I am annoyed by a lot of the hype over certain types of bands which have no substance when it comes down to it. I also think there are a lot of really great bands that few people care about. That is too bad, but it doesn't surprise me.

I'm not as vehemently anti-mainstream as a lot of people involved with punk rock. I enjoy music by itself, I pay as little attention as possible paid to things like who pays for the record, who distributes the record, what kinds of shows the band plays, and, although it is very hard, what kind of people the band members are. I try very hard not to get caught up in petty scene politics. Even if something catches my interest, I try to avoid it. I can't be so anal about such things. For me, it is not healthy.

I have only been really involved with independent music for about five years, and it is hard for me to say what has changed. From what I can tell, the biggest changes occurred in the early 90s when the underground was kind of commercialized and stupid kids like me found themselves flocking to the malls to buy albums by whatever band you used think was cool, on the inferior compact disc format. Since I have been involved, the same things have happened over and again. Bands form, bands break up, good bands get hyped, good band's fans start hating them because their shows get too big, good bands break up or sign to major labels then break up, good bands start ambient dub side projects. Or, in the case of hardcore bands, bands form, bands record a demo, bands record a seven inch, bands breakup, singer steals band's money, moves to Florida and becomes a model for Tommy Hilfiger. And along the way there are always an infinite number of promoters, zines, and others who keep things going and never get much appreciation.

MRR: Are there too many bands? What music inspires you these days?

Todd: Numerically, I suppose, no. Quality-wise, the answer would be different.

Will: Yes, there are too many bands, but I don't really feel like it's my place to judge. Who says my band has more worth than a band like THE HUNTINGTONS? Well, I do. But who cares what I think? I just wish I didn't have to weed through all of the crap and have people tell me "Oh, yeah, they're *amazing*!" When the band has lyrics like "Straight edge, what it means to me, a reason to resist, can't you see?" sung over the same riff that UNDERTOW used in every song they wrote, ten years ago.

Annie: No, there's never too many bands, but I think about 99% of them are lackluster and without heart. Call me a snob, but I am really picky about the music I like. It has to somehow inspire me, whether it is musically, ideologically, artistically, etc. This usually translates into local bands for me, or bands of friends of mine. I can get into bands more when they are readily accessible, I can get to know those people and have some insight into their personalities and beliefs.

In the Bay Area, there seems to be such a boom of these really amazing bands. Hickey was probably my number one. That band simultaneously devastated and elated me. Allergic to Bullshit, Abandon, and The Peels are really great and totally inspiring. Especially Ivy [from Allergic to Bullshit], whose beautiful voice and personal endeavors are completely amazing to me.

In Chicago, there are a bunch of great bands as well, like Fourth Rotor, The Sonnets (holy shit they are good!), Lynyrd's Innards, The Nobs, and Fourteen or Fight. Those are all bands with really intelligent songwriting, which I respect and admire, as well as the individuals who make them up. Todd has got me into some really good hip hop, which before I never would have touched with a ten foot pole. Dead Prez are really inspiring and politically active. So is Mos Def, who is also helluv sexy.

Todd: Mos Def is a sexy man. I hope we can all agree on that.

MRR: What does DIY mean to you? Has this changed over time?

Annie: I used to really chastise myself for not being able to live up to my self-imposed standards of DIY. I came to realize that no one in this community is 100% DIY and it's

silly to sweat over the things we can't control. All I can do is try and lead the best life I can. It is the things I can control, however, that I have to uphold. Sure, I didn't knit my amplifier from hemp leaves, but I can control where the music I create with that amp is sold and where it is played. Besides, unless I come across a recipe for Gatorade, I will forever be a slave to mass-produced, electrolyte replenishing sports drinks.

Todd: Where's Doug Ward when you need him?

Will: DIY means Do It Yourself. DIY doesn't mean that much to me. I think, mainly because I associate it with suburban kids stricken with white guilt, who have this fairytale idea that we can "smash the state" by screening patches which state as much, taking hardened bagels from dumpsters, and publishing zines about dance parties, root beer, and whatever Cometbus band has just broken up, along with REALLY uninspiring political writing. DIY is great, but shut up about it.

Personally, I do things in the way that feels right to me, which a lot of the time involves me doing it myself. I don't have any interest in abiding by any DIY rules or guidelines, though, or debating why the new AGAINST ME! 7" costs 50 cents more than the last one. At that point, it's just as ridiculous as straight-edge.

Todd: Sure, a lot of not-so-dazzling suburbanites can leech onto anything, but that doesn't really change the core of the host's function, necessarily. This has been said before, but I'll say it in my own words: we're supposed to be comforted in our artificial sameness. Comforted by the fact that we all, just like people in other countries around the world, have iMacs. We're also reassured of our individuality by the array of hues we're allowed pick from. We see this manufactured commonality internationally; it's a symptom of worldwide financial tentacles of which we're all aware. The same rabble-soothing faces on everything.

DIY provides a forum to prove a human quality: that music, art and words created by individuals working beyond a mindset of sales, corporate domination, and often antiquated moral legislation, can reach someone on the other side of the country or the world with what they are expressing. I don't think that the nature of DIY has changed per se, rather that some one-time DIY institutions and bands have grown out of that way of thinking and accomplishing their goals to go in other, often ironically lateral directions as far as success goes. Specifically "grown out of" and not "grown up."

MRR: How do you see your band in relation to any sort of local music scene?

Todd: Geographically, very close.

Annie: Well, I guess since we live here, we're local. But I don't know how relevant we are or how much impact we have on it, but there's a group of people that come to the shows and dance and we love them for it. I am really thankful that we have been accepted into this scene with open arms. People have been so great to us from the start. So I fee-a bit of a responsibility to respond to that in kind and let people know how much we appreciate that.

Will: I feel like a part of it, because we play shows together with bands from the area. I also think it is kind of wack, because I feel like there are a lot of people who won't give bands a chance that aren't in their narrow category of music that they like. Like, we could play a show with FOR THE CROWN, ARTIMUS PYLE, and SONGS FOR EMMA, and the amount of people who would stay to check out each band would probably be, like 10% of whoever was at the show. I think I just have seen too many old flyers where it would be a show like MONSULA, NEUROSIS, JAWBREAKER, FORETHOUGHT, JOHN HENRY WEST, and FILTH, and I really wish shows like that could happen.

MRR: What would you like to see change about the music scene in your area?

Will: Well, kind of what I was talking about in the last question. That, and vegan corndogs in the Gilman store.

Todd: As long as the Gilman store has Chloe and Sweetooth, I don't care if all they have are paper cups. I suppose in general some sense of self-irony would be nice, like what it must have felt like for Bob Mould to sing "Love Is All Around." Not that that needs to happen again, specifically.

MRR: Is punk rock a relevant medium for addressing larger societal and global issues? If so, how?

Will: I think people should address whatever they feel passionate about, whether that is some girl next door they have a crush on or the harsh treatment of animals in testing. I think it's annoying when bands say things because they feel like they're supposed to. Like some dude from a band is up on stage going, "OK, this war...really sucks. George Bush is a fascist and he hates black people, and the system is so fucked that you should throw bricks at cop's heads cause that will change everything. Either that or you should start a depressing political themed band that everyone pretends to like, and then you can rant about pointless bullshit onstage like me. This song's called *Fuck Your Racist War!* We have t-shirts and stickers in the back." Now, some or all of those things may be true, but I don't feel like there is any dialogue going on. It makes me want to give up on politics altogether. Just think about what you're going to say. If it is something interesting on intelligent, by all means, say it! But things aren't black and white, and you don't have all the answers, no one does. I think there are great political punk bands, but a lot of bands that shouldn't even touch that stuff. God knows I shouldn't.

Todd: But what about that moment when all the music stops and the guy is all, "BUU-UUH!" and then the music starts again? That's the stuffing inside the turkey. I love hardcore, really.

MRR: Why is rock 'n' roll so dick oriented?

Will: You're forgetting Fire Party.

Todd: Historically, the nature of the dick has been to attempt domination. It's really incredibly goofy. Rock 'n' roll isn't so much dick-oriented—that would imply songs about dicks and penis cover art—as it is dick-dominated, which is worse, I think.

Annie: Oh come on, I mean, look at a fucking microphone! It looks like a huge dick, and if you've ever seen the Cramps live, you know what can be done with it. Headstocks, drumsticks. It's all super phallic.

MRR: Annie, do you feel there's a higher standard for you to prove yourself as a musician, because the male-dominated scene might easily dismiss you based on

your gender rather than musicianship?

Annie: No, because if someone's going to dismiss our band because I'm a female, chances are, A) I don't know about it anyway—it's not like guys come up and say "Hey, I am not going to go see your band cause you're a girl!" and, B) Even if they did come up and say that, they'd just be a fuckin' moron anyway and I would tell them to fuck off and keep walking. I never have seen myself as any representative for a female-orientated scene, I just like playing this music, and I can write songs and play the guitar just as fine as most other people. I also don't believe people should make any concessions for us or any other band, because of the female element. I love to see women in bands, and wish there were more of them, but I get really bored with the ones that capitalize on the fact that they are girls, you know? It's like, who cares if you have tits or a penis? If you want to play music, you have to sit down and learn the instrument no matter what sex you are. In the whole 13 years I have been playing music, only once has some guy made a crass comment out loud to me and by the end of the show, me, my bandmates Jake and Bryan, and others all had words with him and he apologized. All in all, I feel really supported, especially in the Bay Area scene, as far as gender roles in music go. Song material, however, is a different matter. I really like when people address gender issues through their music. Bands like The Death Wish Kids and Aesop Rock, they have songs I really like that address gender roles and how women are viewed in society.

MRR: Besides issues of gender, what are some other issues you think might need to be addressed in the punk community?

Will: Just say whatever you are truly inspired to say, and do it in the most interesting way possible, without being pretentious.

Todd: Yeah. But don't fuck up because you're in a training seminar for amateur social critics with severe bipolar disorders. The revolution will be partially tepid and largely incoherent. That's just the way it's going to have to be. I'm kidding, sort of.

Annie: Apathy, especially considering the events that have occurred during Idiot Bush's regime, is the most trying and depressing ailment of our society. The population of this country has the right, defined by our constitution, to oust this piece of shit monster. So how do we make that happen? Or ensure that this won't happen again? Our minds have been so numbed to the poor, the junkies, the gunshots, and the routine that it takes the instant deaths of 3000 Americans to momentarily peel our eyes away from the idiot box.

MRR: What are some embarrassing bands you like?

Annie: Oh, I like Journey and Depeche Mode, but I'm not that embarrassed by that.

Todd: Will would be best to answer that one. I like reggae—is that embarrassing? I don't know, I don't feel embarrassed about that, but that's different than liking embarrassing music.

Will: I'm not embarrassed of any bands I like, but there are a large number of bands and artists that people think I should not like and that usually draw laughter from peers. Some of them follow: COUNTING CROWS, NATALIE MERCHANT, STEELY DAN, EMINEM, SMOKING POPES, BANE, CRASH TEST DUMMIES, 50 CENT, NOFX, ALKALINE TRIO, late AFI, JETS TO BRAZIL, and RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE. I'm sure there's a lot more I'm forgetting. Stuff that I have been jamming lately that seems to be okay with people: THE THERMALS (we all went to see them twice when they were down here), BANE!!!, CARRIE NATIONS, NEIL YOUNG, MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT, THE SUICIDE FILE, THE PEELS, and HERMETO PASCUAL, among countless, countless others.

Todd: You forgot James Taylor. He is the cause of the only real argument Will and I have ever had. The argument took place in Fresno. This ranks very high on the "be glad you weren't there" list of band happenings.

Annie: Oh, yeah, Will. I'm all for your eclectic music tastes, but *that* guy? Yikes. It's like eating a tub of butter - nauseating and unappetizing. I'm just kidding. Well, not really.

MRR: What do you guys do in your spare time besides music?

Will: I work at a small, though not independent movie theatre, with a nice assortment of folks. I read a lot more than I did in high school. I book shows at various spaces. I watch films. Right now I'm getting through the *Twin Peaks* series. I try to find people to play baseball with. I eat good food. Lately, I have started learning about Buddhism and have started practicing meditation. Most importantly, I try to keep in contact with my good friends.

Todd: The *Twin Peaks* series is television, not film, dude. It doesn't matter if it's on a video cassette.

Annie: I work nights and graveyard shifts as a vet tech at an emergency animal clinic. It's very much like a regular emergency room, except it's dogs and cats and bunnies and shit. The stuff that comes in is scary and bloody sometimes. For instance, last night, I was by myself sitting on the x-ray table with this big shepherd. All of a sudden, he decided he'd had enough and started to go agaonal and die. All I could do was pet him and tell him what a good pup he was. Within 30 seconds he was gone. It was really haunting and mortal. Sad things aside, however, I like my job very much.

I also read a lot about labor history, especially nineteenth century happenings. My social life is pretty stale because of my wacky job hours. And I play with my dogs, Stiles and Fischer, a lot.

Todd: I do the same things they just mentioned with different nouns and adjectives. I don't want to get into it. Sometimes my friend AJ and I will go down to the docks by where the tugboats herd the tankers and drink Anchor Steam.

MRR: What types of plans do you have for the future?

Annie: Well, our main goal was to get a lamp for the practice space, so we didn't have to have the fluorescent lights on all the time. We just completed that one after a year and three months, so now, we feel empty and sad. We need a new goal.

Todd: I want to get a nice bear suit, then. I want to be the one prying that big ass rifle out of Charlton Heston's cold, dead hands. Better make it a low-quality ape suit.

There are also a bunch of songs that should be coming out on Left Off The Dial in a couple of vinyl episodes before the end of the year.

Will: There are these four songs we have recorded from half a year ago that are coming out on an LP comp with ABANDON, SHOTWELL, and THE PEELS. Recently we have been practicing a lot, and writing songs which will go on a full-length record. I think we're shooting to record that in the fall, and then tour a lot, like as much as possible.

Todd: It's all true.

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SKIP JENSEN AND HIS SHAKIN' FEET

MRR: First of all, can you tell us who the members of Skip Jensen and His Shakin' Feet are? When and how did you meet?

SKIP: Skip Jensen is me, and now I'm accompanied by my feet, maybe at some point I'll be accompanied by other people. Then the words "shakin' feet" will be changed for the occasion, obviously.

MRR: You're involved in lots of other bands; which ones?

SKIP: Well, Scat Rag Boosters is still active, but we're like those terrorist groups that you only hear about from time to time. I also play in a two piece band called Stack O'Lees, that's with Édouard of Scat Rag Boosters, Royal Routes, etc. We should have some songs out soon. Once in a while, another project, The Wrong Doers, pops up. We play covers like Merle Haggard, Charlie Feathers, Link Wray, Child Molesters, Chuck Berry, etc. It's very fun, it's more danceable, party stuff. The other three members are Édouard, plus Roy and Danny of Les Sexareenos.

MRR: Is Skip Jensen your main band and the others just side projects?

SKIP: These days it's becoming my main thing, maybe this will change later. I don't know, but I like it very much. It depends what I want to do musically, too. It's fun to play with other people, I love it. But with my solo project, I have a lot of liberties. It's very convenient.

MRR: Do you write the same way for your different bands or do you know in advance for which band a new song will be used?

SKIP: Most of my songs I can play alone now and I do, but some songs I want to hear with a band. Most of the time for the drums, because they will give it a swing that I don't have when I play alone. Sometimes it's good for another guitar or harmonica. I would like to add organ sometimes, maybe someday I'll try it.

It's not in advance that I know for which band a new song will be, it's after. I think of what would be better for the song. But I'd like to be able to play them all alone, if it's possible.

MRR: Why a one-man band? Compared to the usual, what are the advantages and the drawbacks?

SKIP: A one-man band is freedom, that's for sure. You can only argue with yourself, so you can save a lot of time, if you're not too schizophrenic.

Also, since I started playing guitar, I used to accompany myself with my feet, it's very natural. I was recording and liking the sound a lot. So, I wanted to do something with this lonely sound and here it is, finally.

The disadvantages might be that, when you play a show where nobody seems to care, you have no one to turn to, you're all alone. But it's all right, I love it.

MRR: What's the deal with Montreal? It seems there are lots of great garage punk bands and Montreal will very soon have the honor of a "Sympathy City" comp.

SKIP: In fact, in the last couple of years, there have been some pretty good bands. The same people are in most of them. I remember very well seing The Spaceshits in 1995 or 96. They were like a kick in the ass, five guys playing this fun and furious rock'n'roll. It was great. Not long after, Scat Rag Boosters were doing their first shows. Quickly, we became friends with them and since then we've always played together. We never really liked most of the other bands from Montreal.

The best bands for us were the bands that our friends were in. We often felt like the other bands were rockstar wannabes or had stupid attitudes, so we stuck together. On that Montreal comp you will have the best rock'n'roll bands from Montreal, that is for sure.

MRR: Is it easy to find a place to play in the city? Do big crowds attend the garage punk gigs?

SKIP: Well, we can always find a place to play; it depends on what kind of place you want to play in. For the best places, you have to wait awhile to get a good night. Édouard organized a few shows in a practice space lately. It's been more fun then in a real bar, it's more like a party. I don't know how long this will last, but it's a lot of fun. Sometimes there are bigger crowds, mostly for out-of-town bands. There are still some shows where there are few people.

MRR: I know you speak French, why do you sing in English? Are there two scenes, the French language one and the English language one?

SKIP: French is my first language, indeed. I sing in English because I don't listen to much French music. Most of my sources of inspiration come from people who sing in English. I learned English reading song lyrics. For me, it's more natural like this. Every time I tried to sing in French, I didn't like it for one second. I rarely listen to music sung in French, so why would I want to create it? I want to be part of something I love. Maybe this will change one day, maybe I'll become a French singer soon, though I doubt it very much. I have nothing against singing in French, I think it's natural, but not for me, even though my first language is French. It's a matter of taste.

In a lot of musical genres in Montreal there are two scenes. But a lot of bands play together, French or English. It's not hatred or anything. We've played a lot of times with bands who sing in French. They're our friends; we don't care about the language separation.

MRR: Do you think that when a band sings in French it sounds more like "novelty?"

SKIP: No, I think it's fine. What I would see as a novelty would be more the style they play, like yé-yé, surf, etc. I'm used to hearing French now. Maybe if it were sung in some Asian language, then I would think it's special. Not Guitar Wolf-style of singing, 'cos then, you can hardly hear what language it is.

MRR: One of my fave bands ever is Deja Voodoo, a Montreal band from the 80s. Do you know what they are doing now? Do you think they had an influence on the scene?

SKIP: I've seen them once a long time ago. I wasn't impressed much, I have to say. I don't know what they're doing at all. I don't think they were a big influence to anyone I know, so I would say they didn't have a big impact. Nobody reminisces much about those days. The scene for rock'n'roll is much better now, in my opinion.

MRR: Let's go for the unavoidable question: Who are your main influences and which artists do you listen to these days?

SKIP: Well, I grew up listening to only punk and hardcore music for years. Before that, it was normal rock music. When I was a child, my father had a collection of easy listening music, or singers like Elvis, Adamo, Tom Jones, Charles Aznavour. My favourite was probably Sacha Distel, 'cos he had funny songs that a child would find amazing. But I always loved Elvis, of course. Anyway, I was formed by punk music mainly, I believe, and all the other music you hear everywhere, like when you do your shopping. It has in influence on you, unfortunately, most of the time.

I've always been very curious, so over the years I've heard a lot of different music and what stayed is mainly rock'n'roll in all its forms and American folk music. Right now, I've got a western swing compilation of Texas bands from 1928 to 1944, among other things. I've been listening to the Feast of Snake LP. Some Montreal stuff: BBQ, Royal Routes. I've got with me a comp called Miami Sound 1967-1974. Charlie Monroe has been around lately, too. I just bought a Carter Family and a Hank Williams LP I didn't have. I came back from Europe with two demos I like, The Intellectuals and The Come n'Go. Also, an El Zombies 7". I've been listening to a Motorhead tape, too. A lot of different things. Old jazz from the 20s and 30s too. I love Duke Ellington and stuff like that.

MRR: Same questions but more specifically with the one-man bands. What do you think about all the one-man-bands appearing everywhere?

SKIP: If it's good, it's fun. Why should we always go see several people playing together? Or only buy records made by several people. That's not the only way to make music. There have always been people playing alone. Right now there's a lot of one-man bands, it's probably a fashion, but it also signifies that people are trying and wanting different things and that's good. As long as you want to hear it, well then, it's fine.

MRR: Are there any bands or singers you didn't listen to necessarily every day but came back regularly onto your turntable over the years?

SKIP: Well, some things keep coming back onto my turntable, like Charlie Patton. There is something about him I don't quite get. It bugs me in a good way. Dock Boggs, too, actually. I love Blind Willie McTell a lot. Some country blues songs by the likes of Furry Lewis, John Hurt, Barbecue Bob, Bukka White, it's everything you want in a song, it's all right there. Fred McDowell, Blind Willie McTell, Leadbelly, Blind Lemon Jefferson. It's just great. Hank Williams, oh boy, Hank Williams, there are no words... Bluegrass music like Charlie Monroe, Stanley Brothers, etc. The Anthology Of American Folk Music. What's fun about this kind of music is that it almost sounds like it's from another world. It makes you move. OK, I think I should shut up now. That's it.

MRR: Which bands that are very popular amongst the "garage punk crowd" do you not like and which bands that are very unpopular do you love a lot?

SKIP: I don't buy a lot of new records, I know what's happening musically in a way, I guess. But a lot of new bands I haven't heard yet. I'm always behind, but it doesn't bother me. Also, there are a lot of new bands that I don't like much. I read crazy good reviews, and then I hear it, and I think it's bad or so-so. There is so much good music out, there's no time to lose listening to generic music. It costs a lot of money to buy new records; I don't know how people do it. I like the Crystal Gazing Luck Amazing LP by the Compulsive Gamblers a lot. It's one of my favourite albums from the past years. I like BBQ and Royal Routes from Montreal. I like Bassholes. I heard some Buff Medways and I thought it was great.

Now, some bands start sounding more indie, or arty, I was never into that kind of music, so why would I go back to it now? I've had it with indie, arty rock, no more, please. I don't mean that I only like hard music, but the college music thing doesn't move me very much. But, like in any other style, there are good things and bad ones, I guess.

MRR: Tell us about your recent European tour. Where did you go? With whom did you play?

SKIP: Well, I played mostly in Italy; I went all the way to the south, places like Palermo, Reggio, Naples. Those cities are less often visited by touring bands. And there I was with my tambourine and my piece of wood taped to my foot?they probably wondered what the hell I was doing. So I played ten shows in Italy, three shows in Switzerland, two shows in Holland, and one in Germany. It was my first time in Europe, it was a blast. I was touring with a duo from Holland called Lo-Lite, played 14 shows with them and two shows with Superhelicopter from Germany. All great people.

MRR: How about the reaction of the European people?

SKIP: On only two occasions was the reception deceiving, one time in a small town in Italy, called Avellino. The bar was a blues club and people were there just to go out, they probably thought I was a pretentious asshole trying to ruin their evening. The other place was in Italy again, in Trento, same kind of night, but some people were cheering, so it wasn't all bad. At the other shows, the reception was very good, I thought. People in Europe like music; they can be very enthusiastic, which is fun. I loved it.

MRR: Any great moments or painful memories you want to share with us?

SKIP: We were driving in a riot police van, so the carabinieris (Italian police) wanted to check us out sometimes. And they did twice. The time in Palermo was actually pretty funny. They thought we were some sort of terrorists. We had parked the van in a square and they came to fetch us out of the restaurant where we were eating. When we got back to the square, there was a security parameter around the van. The bomb squad was thinking of bombing the van, to see if it was full of explosives. You know they do that, bomb first and check it after. We felt very important, there were like ten to 15 policemen around us.

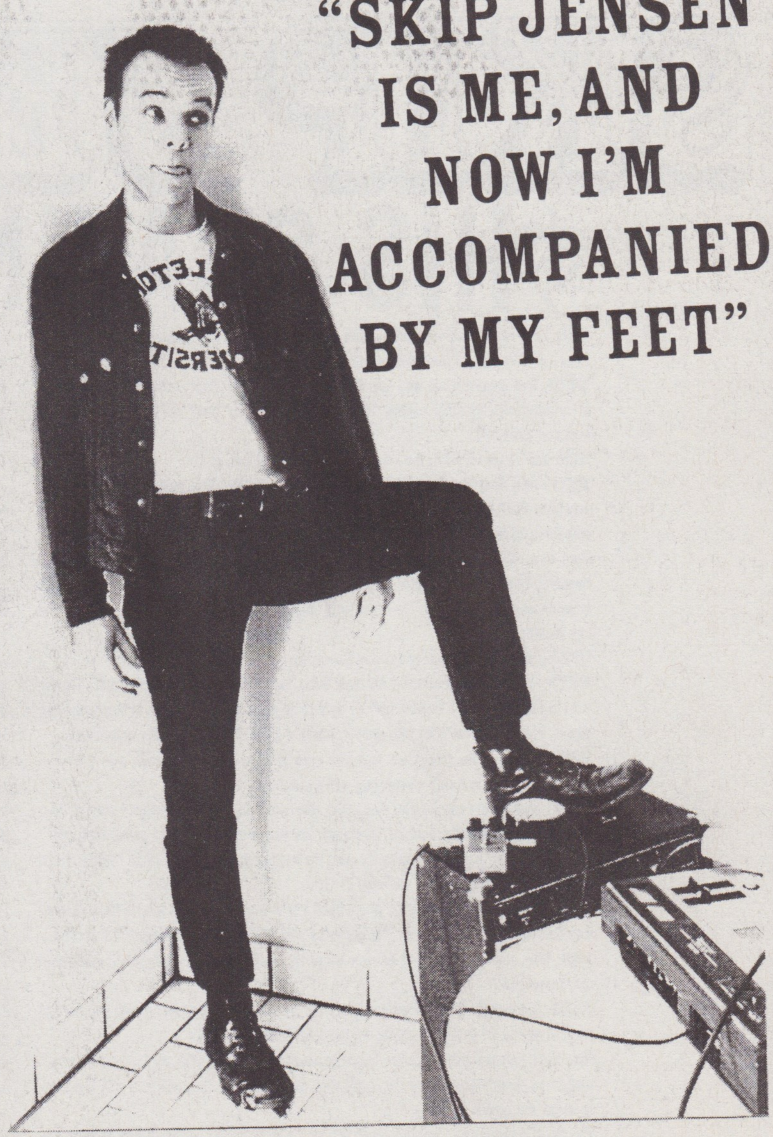
MRR: Any future plans? Records or tours?

SKIP: Well, my second 7" is coming out this summer on Yakisakana Records. There's another one coming out on Kryptonite Records too, a split 7" with BBQ on Goodbye Boozy Records coming out this fall. Right now, I'm looking for a label to release a full-length. If I find one, I should have an LP out by the end of the year, hopefully. I might be going in Europe to do some shows with Superhelicopter and also with BBQ. So it would be like two different tours. I hope it works out. Scat Rag Boosters should be more active this year, too. Stack'O Lees should have some releases, too, this year.

MRR: Any last comments?

SKIP: Take good care of yourself. Bye

"SKIP JENSEN IS ME, AND NOW I'M ACCOMPANIED BY MY FEET"



MRR: Hello Iny, How are you dude?

Iny: Hello from the cold Czech Republic. We've had snow here already, what about you?

MRR: To start, tell us about Gride's beginning. What was most difficult in all these years with Gride for you?

Iny: Well, Gride started its existence in spring 1996. We played our first gig after about four months of rehearsals. Our first performance lasted 15 minutes and, trust me, I can't understand how I survived it. I'm naturally an introvert and so a bit shy. So you can imagine how stressful and traumatic was for me to perform for 100 people. I remember that the others had similar feelings. Our drummer even had some intestinal ailment. But I don't think that this gig was bad due our nervousness. It was a very cool show. The insane mosh pit, stage diving, etc. I mean we couldn't have wished a better atmosphere for Gride's premiere. The difficulties worth mentioning are problems with bass players. We now have the fourth guy who has played with us. It seems we are cursed and we maybe won't find a reliable man who will stay more than two years with us. We have other problems, such as the absence of a good car for touring and going to gigs, but I don't want to scare you more.

MRR: Can you tell me how important your lyrics are? What topics do you prefer to write about? How many rehearsals does Gride do each week? What are your favorite bands and what bands influence Gride?

Iny: Lyrics are very important for me, maybe because I'm the man who writes and shouts them. Like guitarist checks his riffs and drummer his rhythms, I'm in lyrics. If music is the thing that people usually notice first, lyrics are perceived secondly. It's the same as you meeting men. First you see their appearance and only secondly their personality. Lyrics are the soul of music. You can listen to band with nice music but stupid lyrics and you will miss something here. My friend Jozka (See You In Hell singer) told me that he can't listen to the old Czech extreme HC band Suicidal Commando, because of their fucking racial lyrics (shit like "Beat the colored men"). He told me he likes the music but these lyrics are such terrible shit that he doesn't listen this band more. I completely agree with him. Lyrics are very important. When they are stupid, music is only a nice facade without any volume. I try to deal with creating lyrics, even for several months, until I'm finally satisfied with their form. When I write Gride's lyrics, I mainly draw topics from my life, feelings, opinions, and neighborhood. I wanna express my political attitude in the same way, with my personal experiences. I mix it like it's mixed in our lives. Politics are involved in every one of our acts and environment and there aren't many real opportunities to say your word about it. I mean, to be heard by someone. So when you have the opportunity to

do it, you are nearly obligated to do it and shout your opinions and anger to the world. Gride usually rehearses twice a week. But right now we don't at all, because our drummer broke his finger at work and we have to wait until he is able to play again. I love old hardcore bands like Minor Threat, Jerry's Kids, Negative Approach, Youth Brigade, DRI, Siege, Reagan Youth, Larm etc.; extreme HC—Hellnation, Spazz, Capitalist Casualties, Charles Bronson, Locust; emo-violence—The End of Century Party, Palatka; raw punk, old—Dead Kennedys, Wretched, Discharge, Shitlickers, Anti-Cimex, MOB47; crust—Doom, Autoritar, Ent; depressive hc—His Hero is Gone, Dystopia; grind core, old—Napalm Death, Phobia, Agathocles, Cripple Bastards, Unholy Grave, and some hundred other bands (metal, doom, alternative rock, etc.). I'm really addicted to music. I mean that all these bands influence us and there are many more of them, I mean, because there I mention only my favorites. The others have their own and if I asked them you would have an issue full of our favorite bands.

MRR: You have been playing for quite a while now and have released numerous tapes and some vinyl, but one thing bugs me: Will you get around to releasing a CD? Is it just the cost or are you consciously avoiding a CD so as to keep some 'underground' credibility?

Iny: We love vinyl above all and so all our released stuff were firstly on vinyl and secondly on tapes. The question of money isn't important; the reason is just our liking vinyl records. Releasing vinyl records is the same or maybe more expensive as CD. The only press factory in Czech Republic raised prices for pressing some years ago and doing vinyl records isn't an alternative to CDs when we speak about costs. But it's still an alternative to mainstream culture and technological dictatorship by major labels. We aren't strictly anti-CD. Our next LP will be available in all formats, LP, CD, cassette tape, and this is what we want to do for all of Gride's stuff.

MRR: How are live performances and how are the public's responses? What are some favorite places to play?

Iny: We have played about 150 gigs, including some short tours, and each of them is different. We have experienced from really bad shows to excellent and enthusiastic gigs. The worst one was probably in Slany, where we couldn't finish a single song because of a very slippery floor under the drums, or in Brno, where the situation was similar. Good shows were, for example, in Wien, in Hradec Kralove with Phobia, tours with Mrtva Budoucnost and See You In Hell in Prerov, Holubov, in Prague with Antichrist, Brno with Dead And Gone, etc. I can't remember all of them. Good places to play are squats, small clubs, basically places where you have direct contact with people and relations between the band and the other people are more immediate: face-to-face, hand-to-hand, voice-to-voice. Such gigs are usually atmospheric and familiar.

MRR: Are you vegan or vegetarian? If yes, give to us some good motives for being vegetarian or vegan.

Iny: I'm vegan. Cert and David are vegetarians. Michal was vegetarian for a few years but he recently started eat meat again. Don't ask me why, I don't know. Maybe because of a bad social situation. There are several reasons for being vegan or vegetarian: moral—you don't want accept to killing innocent beings for your meals and you also protest against the industrial production of meat in this way; economic—production of meat is more expensive than growing plants. People grow plants and then they feed animals with the crops. Why couldn't they straight eat these crops? Maybe you know that comparative figures on how many people can live on the products grown on one hectare of soil when they eat meat, vegetarian food, or when they are vegan. Vegan supports the most; health? people who eat vegan or vegetarian food are more healthy than carnivores; solidarity—when many people in the developing countries cannot eat meat because they are too poor to buy it, I won't do it either.

MRR: The Czech Republic's scene is very strong (I know of great bands like Malignant Tumour, See You In Hell, Napalmed Ingrowing, and Twisted Truth). What about it? Tell us something about bands, distros, zines.

Iny: You are right, I also think that there is good scene in the Czech republic. We have a lot of bands, several distros, and several zines here. You can find some awesome places to play: Moravia (east of the state), Pisek, Teplice, Vrah club, 007, and Papirna (a semi-legal squat) in Prague. Besides the bands you mentioned, I can recommend Dread 101 (crust-as-fuck, ex-Lies and Distrust), Lumen (excellent emo-core), Underfire (old-school HC), Co-Ca (anarchopunk), Mindlock (HC/grind—unfortunately, I think they split up recently), Balaclava (great SXE HC), Disfigured Corpse (HC/grind), Nesoucast Stroje (powerful, noisy, fast HC), Nema Barikada (the same), Dezinfekce (NYHC in the vein of Sick Of It All), Kevorkian (metal emo-core), Climatizado (computer extreme-HC), Sicherha Tesystem (HC influenced by old Italian bands), Crucify Yourself and Old Testament (great emo-violence bands, but both are split up), Pangs of Remorse (they were the first power-violence band in mid-Europe), Not (HC in Crossed Out style), Cerebral Turbulency (grind, reminds me of Nasum), Diskriminace (Dis-clone), Rabbies (noise-crust, they sound like they live somewhere in Latin America). Twisted Truth have split up already and Malignant Tumour cannot be considered a Czech band because Bilos moved to the Netherlands and founded a new Malignant there, so now they are a Dutch band. They have played some gigs already and recorded a full-length LP on Insane Society Records.

On to labels and distros. The best labels here are Badman Records and Insane Society Records. Day After Records has great distribution; it's the biggest distro in the Czech Republic. They also do mail order to Malaria Great distribution, which releases punk/crust stuff. Smaller distros and labels are, for example, Impregnate, Papagajuv Hlasatel, View Beyond, and Instinct Records. If we talk about zines, you have to be aware of fact that all of them are written in Czech. At best there are only English summaries. The most important and interesting zines are *Hluboka Orba, Komunikace, Doom's Day, Noise Master, Impregnate, Choroba Mysli, Buryzone, Express Your Feelings, XEnslavementX*, and *XTemplettonX*. There is also a newsletter called *Killed by Noise*, that informs people about upcoming gigs, zines, and events. It was founded by Filip of See You In Hell, but he was too busy to continue doing it, so Bohdan (of *Impregnate*) took it over for him. You can see it on www.czechcore.cz . It's a great Czech HC portal with some sections in English.

MRR: What do you think about the Czech Republic's political and religious situation right now? Give your honest comments about nationalism. Are any of you involved in political activities outside of the band?

Iny: There were elections a few months ago. Social democrats won them but it doesn't matter who won. There still will be two classes, one rich and one poor, and a distribution of power mostly to those who have money. They will become richer and poor become poorer—it's the basic principle of capitalism. As long as we aren't able to abolish the capitalist system and state, we will suffer by this economic and power separation. Social democrats are socialist only according to their party's name. They take some steps that reduce some personal freedom and some economic measures to

increase the liberation of trade, which will lead to more restrictions on social living. They work toward joining the European Union [EU] and they have to take some steps to satisfy the EU's demands. A lot of these demands could handicap and devastate any parts of society, but most likely the poorer ones. For example, Czech agriculture may be effectively abolished. They are also organizing a big NATO summit in November. So we live in an atmosphere of a threat to organizers of protests and people who go to demonstrations.

The religious situation isn't bad, for example, in Poland or Slovakia, because many people are still atheist here. The reason for it is probably the atheist education during the so-called "Real Socialism," the dictatorship of the KSC, the Czechoslovak Communist Party, in the years 1948 to 1989, and also because of the protestant and reformatory traditions here. There were several crusades against the Czechs in the 15th century because of the strength of the Hussite movement. I think also that the atheism of the Czechs stems from their opposition to jesuitisation and imposed Catholicism in the 17 and 18th centuries. Nowadays, after abolishing the KSC dictatorship in 1989, there has been a wave of popularization of several sects but that involved only a minority of people. Nowadays, some Asian religions are popular, too, like Buddhism and Hinduism, but people who live strictly according to those religions you find only rarely.

Nationalism is biggest stupidity I know of. Wars are based on it and it builds walls among people who live in the same neighborhoods. When I see all that stuff like flags, or hear hymns, and so on, I have strong feeling to vomit. When you imagine all the dead bodies and gallons of blood behind it you can't be surprised.

I'm a member of the Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation. We organize some protests and put out two magazines and several booklets. We are preparing protests against the NATO summit. I also help organize the trade union at my work and I was involved in Food Not Bombs with my girlfriend, but I'm too busy to do that now, but I still support them a lot. There are three big Food Not Bombs groups, two in Prague and one in Pilsen. You can find a few smaller groups in Liberec and Pribram.

MRR: What are your views on the state of the underground at the moment? Do you think it is a cool place to be? Are there any bands or distros that you personally like or hate? What about the thrash revival thing with What Happens Next? and the like?

Iny: I think that the underground is cool place to be in. Of course there are some problems, but generally I'm delighted to be in the underground. I know many people in the Czech Republic and all over the world, and we can go to play to foreign countries and release and trade records with them. When I try to explain

the basics of the hardcore underground to so-called "normal" people, they often aren't able to understand. They can't understand the DIY idea and non-profit attitude of hardcore. When I return from tour, the only thing that is interesting to them is how much money I earned. It is nice to be in a place where money doesn't mean so much, like it does in the majority of society. Bands, I have told you already: Interesting labels are 625, Slap A Ham, Sound Pollution, Lengua Armada, Prank, Coalition, Flat Earth, etc.

Thrash revival has become a bit trendy, but I like this music so it isn't problem for me. Bands like What Happens Next?, Out Cold, and Scholastic Deth are really excellent.

MRR: Do you have any plans for further domination of the world? Have you played outside the Czech Republic yet? Will you ever get to Asia or is this something to wait for when your first CD is released and you go triple platinum?

Iny: :o) I don't think we would like to dominate the world. We would like to record a full-length LP, finally. But I'm afraid the domination of the world is out. We were on several short tours in Germany, Italy, and Austria with Mrtva Budoucnost and Mindlock. This year we did a tour with See You In Hell. They are our close friends and also play great music. The tour consisted of 13 gigs in Czech, Germany, and the Netherlands. It was excellent. We are preparing another tour for next year. We would like play about 16 gigs in Germany, France, Spain, and Italy. The trip to Asia is great idea. Unfortunately, we are too poor and we can't afford such an expensive tour. But maybe you want to pay for it?

MRR: Please give me your opinion: Is there a future for the grindcore movement in the Czech Republic and all over the world?

Iny: Grindcore is eternal. Recently there appeared to be a tendency to transform grindcore to fucked-up gore and porno shit, but I believe that it won't continue and there will be more bands with more intelligent attitudes than celebrating mass murders and splatter-gore acts of violence. Maybe you think that I'm sectarian but try to read a few interviews with gore bands and you will understand what I mean.

MRR: Besides music, what else could possibly influence you?

Iny: Experience of daily life, politics, literature, movies, nature, culture.

MRR: We'll stop here now. Thanks a lot and let the grinding continue. Add anything you want and plug Gride as much as you want. You guys rule!

Iny: Thank you very much for the interesting questions. In the end, I would like to ask everyone to send me anarchist literature from whole world. I collect it and I think we will agree on trade. So if you can offer me something, just write.

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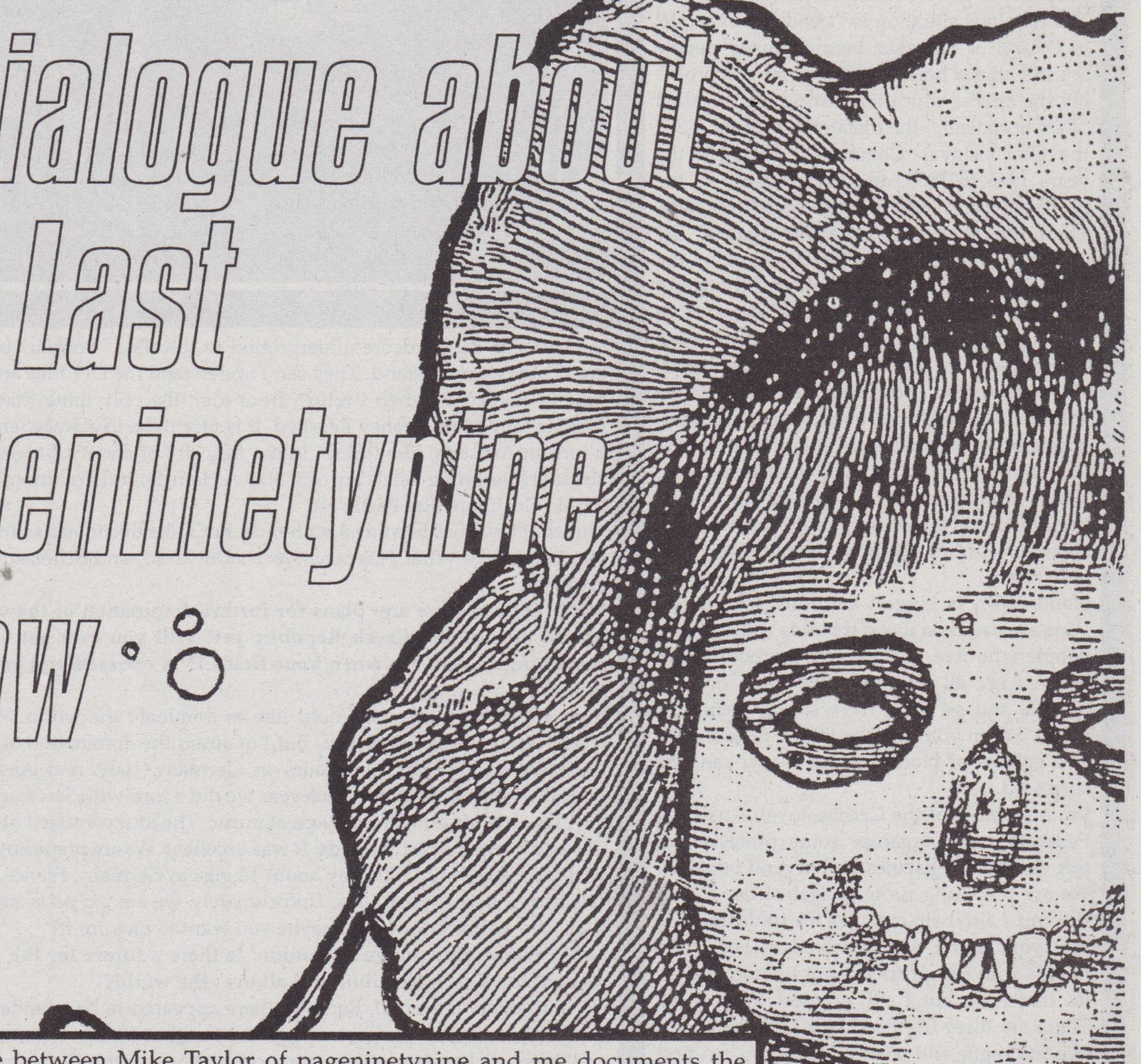
Working Across Difference – A Dialogue about the Last pageninetynine Show



This dialogue between Mike Taylor of pageninetynine and me documents the partnership we created to put together the last pageninetynine show as a benefit for the DC Rape Crisis Center. We grew to know and respect each other from communicating about our differences – like our feelings about the song title "Your Face is a Rape Scene" – and confronting some very real and volatile issues. I feel this kind of story is important to present to people, to show that you can address concerns and differences within in the context of a punk community without giving up on each other, existing in polar opposite, or alienating one another. I hope that more dialogue like this can happen, and particularly that we can value all elements of our communities – bands, show promoters, show goers, and so forth to continue to build an underground music community that affects our lives and worlds beyond just the night of the show.

—Katy Otto

Recorded dialogue between Katy Otto and Mike Taylor

Katy: I first communicated with you when I was involved with Ladyfest DC. There was a show that pageninetynine was invited to be a part of…I felt at this point that I wanted to connect with you about the fact that you had a song titled "Your Face is a Rape Scene." As someone who had some of the same groups of friends, I wanted to be the one to get that communication going and seeing if my preconceptions about your band were right or wrong.

Mike: We were on tour when I got this email. We were with Majority Rule, and I remember being in Indianapolis when I got this email and knowing that I wanted to respond to it right away. You were one of the only people that asked directly about the song title. Some people had before, but a lot of what I heard was more through the rumor mill. I thought it was really cool that you did approach us, that here was this girl who felt it would be in her best interest to approach the band about it. That is why I wanted to give you my time to answer right away. This to me was what it is all about – getting in touch, not hiding behind hearsay. You had heard some things but you said that you were not going to pass judgment until you talked to us. I did a long explanation via email, yes?

Katy: Yes.

Mike: I guess it came across all right – you knew some of what it was all about at that point. Then you emailed again saying sorry to bother you again, but that you had heard from another girl about a show in which I had a mannequin head that my friend Janelle had for a fashion design class. It had messed up hair and black eyes, and looked bloody – she gave it to me for a belated Christmas present. We were being stupid and kicking it around, when that one girl from Positive Force approached us –

Katy: Yeah, my friend.

Mike: I guess I was offended right off the bat, because I was just goofing around and not thinking that it resembled anything. She got really bothered by it and brought it up as a concern. At the time, some people thought it could resemble Chris's ex-girlfriend. Here we were, kicking a head around, and you addressed that again. I told you it wasn't out of spite, that we had gotten it as a gift and were just being silly with it. It made sense when you asked about these things. We weren't out to offend people.

Katy: I remember also knowing that I had heard concerns voiced by other people, and I think when we are talking about things that are close to people, like violence against women in the punk community, it can be hard to bring up. I don't blame other girls who have had concerns and not felt comfortable voicing them to you. I feel like that was the nature of a band like pageninetynine – you have this aggressive, eight-member boy hardcore band. I am glad that I approached you, even if it was over email which is a bit guarded. I needed to say something, because I felt that I had the access to you to do so.

Mike: I agree with you. It made it hard in the case of pageninetynine because if one person did something it could represent the entire group. People would ask if we had something to say when we were playing why didn't we say it, but the chances were that not everyone would agree with it. Punk rock is supposed to be about community – it is a place you go because no one else wants you in their clique or their group. I came to punk rock because it was very accepting. I can see that it seems that kicking a mannequin head around at a show is not very inviting.

Katy: My friend did have a hard time, and maybe email was better for me, because she was very unhappy with her experience approaching you.

Mike: To me I felt like I had answered her question and that I told her we were just being silly. It would be a shame if I shut that communication down.

Katy: I remember seeing the article in the *CityPaper* that said someone in Ladyfest had a problem with us, so we opted out of the benefit. I remember thinking what the fuck? So I contacted you again.

Mike: I understood you emailing again because we had only talked over email, which isn't the warmest means of communication. That article in the *Washington CityPaper* really misquoted us and made it seem that you had offended us. We actually told the reporter that we were impressed and pleased with how you approached us. You aren't supposed to trust people you meet over email, so I again thought it was cool that you emailed us to clarify. That article is completely embarrassing and misquoted us on more than several occasions. That was my first, bite-sized taste of media and how misinterpreted things can be. You went and you did it again, that is ballsy – you pick up a paper and you read about the band that you just talked to and they were slandering you. I am glad you tried again – I am glad someone knows that the paper and the media don't always get it right. We wanted them to see the story about you on the positive side. The paper's slant was writing about pageninetynine as these "badasses," sorta these "West Virginia hick" type boys. He quoted us saying "y'all" for emphasis. I felt the guy was a jerk, and I was embarrassed. I thought well now this will fuck up a trust that I just established with you.

Katy: Even now, doing this conversation, it is not always easy to talk about things like this, because a lot of the things concerning this relate to a lot of things in my past. Part of me wanting punk to be an escape from the shit we deal with every day and for me a huge piece of that is violence against women and girls. I have felt like a bulldog in defending that. I want this to always feel that way in all aspects. It comes from experiencing violence myself in relationships. Because of mistakes I have made in the punk community being in a relationship with someone who was a sexual assaulter and having that person called out and making the gravest mistake in my life by defending that person and making it so that other girls were silenced, I promised myself that I would rather err on the side of holding guys in this community accountable. I can tend to be a loudmouth, and in one instance I used my ferocity and dedication to defend someone who was hurting other girls, and I promised myself I wouldn't do that again. I would rather constantly question, because that is after all what punk taught me to do.

Mike: I agree, and think it is a really good thing that you do that. Now I know what is going on with you personally, and it makes me feel good to know the way you approach situations. Words like rape are intimidating; a mannequin head in a strange context could be too…but also, not knowing us as people could be. I think it was cool that you made that vow to yourself. The rock you turned over with us created a really positive circumstance. When you take something like this and establish friendships, from calling people out…it is valuable and important. I expect that out of people – I expect strong people to be direct and get straight to the problem. Bands that make a mockery of rape do not belong in this community. They don't belong in a community of people with meaningful existences. We can't let that be okay.

Katy: A couple of weeks before the next pageninetynine shows coming up, there were concerns about the space. I got an email from you that really surprised me because it was asked for help finding a venue. It was an ironic, weird twist – and I remember thinking, wow. I went home and thought about it – a *lot*. We had talked and I felt super about the friendship between you and me. But I wondered if I should be involved. How did my ideas make sense? I didn't just want to be the girl setting up the show that was

important to a lot of people for "scene cred" or validation. If I put energy and time into it, I wanted it to make sense in the terms of our interaction. I said, OK, I will do that – but told you that if I were involved it would need to in some way benefit the DC Rape Crisis Center so that my role would make sense. I knew you wanted it to be a free show, but I felt that was the piece needed to tie this all together. Sometimes with setting up shows, I get nervous that they will become so rote that you will do them with no creativity or joy – which is why we should be doing these things in the first place.

Mike: First and foremost, I tried to do the last show myself in a place where I was from and where I felt comfortable, so that I could make it free because it was for everyone else. It was always about the community that surrounded it. I wanted to bury pageninetynine in a nice, peaceful place...our families tried to have it on their farms so we could make food and cook out, where people were happy and felt comfortable. But everything failed, and I remember talking to Matt Michel and he said you should talk to Katy Otto, since you had helped Majority Rule with a venue. I remember I emailed you and it was my last email, my most desperate email – I was definitely pleading. It was 3 1/2 weeks before the date. But the time I got home from work the next day, I had seven emails, and they were all your responses on the subject with everyone, so I was always in the know of every move that was made. You agreed to do it if pageninetynine agreed to give something back – because you were laying a part of you down to do this. By the very nature of our friendship, you thought it would be great if we did it for the DC Rape Crisis Center. Then there was the minor hump of the fact that I wanted it to be free, but I thought fuck it, I don't care about money, we can make a donation as a band and folks at the show can chip in some dollars, and we can do this. I completely agree with you, I thought it was ironic and perfect in a way that it was happening like this. I completely respected it. We were able to give $775. And a broken stage! It made you realize you could trust me, and it made me realize I could trust you. I could think of no better way for this to happen. I thought here is this girl that has done something I hadn't heard of before – you were making this show mean something to you. I knew that. You weren't some brutal pageninetynine fan head banging at every show. But you were a new friend and knew how much it meant to me. It remains one of the biggest favors, if not the biggest favor, that anyone has ever done for me. We decided to do this conversation too based on a critique of pageninetynine that you wrote for *MRR*. You sent it to me first to look at...

Katy: I wrote a column in conjunction with my friend Mike McKee around issues of who is having a voice in punk, expressions and violence against women...I wrote how I felt about the title of the song "Your Face is a Rape Scene." When you decide to be part of the community, you do the work. I would not have sent it in without showing you first. I told you I didn't want to change it but that I wanted you to see it first because it goes along with my ideas about how a community should operate. It means I am going to be here tomorrow, when we are sorting out those differences, and the day after that, and after that...I think one of the most guiding principles in my life is something Bell Hooks, my favorite writer, said – that if your critique isn't coming from a place of love, you shouldn't be critiquing. The reason I spent so much time on this was here was this group of boys that I saw all the time, that my band had played with, who my friends loved...if there is a difference of opinion, we are in a community and it is our right to talk to each other.

Mike: People think the walls of our private little utopia can't be penetrated, but that is not true. We can continue to ask the questions, to be open and honest with people you play music with, people you see at shows, people you end up emailing and networking with and setting up your tours with. If you don't like a band, say it. If you don't like a song title, tell the band. I think people can disagree and be perfectly decent human beings to each other. I think we are a perfect example, which is why I am doing this. I am not even sure where we stand on the title of the song, but I still think that we both are kind of different in our ideas about using those words in a song title. I believe you probably wouldn't want the word "rape" here and there dotted through hardcore songs, whereas for me it's an expression and I think it can be used as long as you know that if you put it in people's faces they have the right to combat you and make sure that you aren't making fun of something like that.

Katy: I spend a lot of energy finding ways that not only this community I live in but also communities I visit and the punk community in general can be inviting to girls and women as much as they are to boys and men. I know it doesn't always break down in terms of gender, but as a girl whose life was in many ways saved by punk, who found it as a place of escape and healing from horrible shit in my life, I just feel like part of my role and purpose and something to give back is for me to tell other girls who are interested, this is your place too. It is important that at every step between you and me, at each step there was a reciprocal step back. One thing that did frustrate me about this was that some people I knew while I was doing this encouraged me to "get pageninetynine for what they were worth." I was alienated by the idea that that is why I would do this. It was never just about money for the benefit. It was me thinking, we always talk about community, now let's *be* a community. Let's take this little world that was supposed to be a place of respite and rest and make it something that explodes out of itself, so that the next day we can keep a hotline going at a rape crisis center that has been there longer than any other one in the country. If that is what punk could be about, we could move mountains.

Mike: You told me about the comments, and that stuff to me...knowing that the band I was in, the words we said...we were always sincere and to hear people say that, it does hurt. I know how long I was involved in this – while other people drop out like flies, I continue to do this...I know I will do this for the rest of my life, playing in bands, going on tour, putting out records... Just a little punk rock show can change your life...it did for me when I was younger, and it makes me feel like it's worth it if even one kid that day felt that way. It can keep growing, the work between you and me, until it gets bigger and bigger, and more and more people feel comfortable under the same roof.

Katy: I think sometimes we do have to put ourselves in places where we feel uncomfortable so we can get to a better place in the end. I am happy that we are sitting here in Sterling, Virginia talking about this. This strengthens my resolve to make what we do in our basements and in our bedrooms and in our community centers explode out into the world so that when we drive to our jobs in the morning, whether they are fun or crappy, we have songs that inspire us through the day, and that a beautiful energy can keep growing.

Mike: I think we did just that. There are so many good people, good bands, good organizations – we can make this a bigger place, that is more inviting, more open to younger people – I can get everyone from Sterling, Virginia out to a benefit if I try hard enough. And that is the point.

Katy: There is no better place we could be at age 25.

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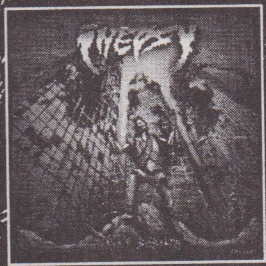

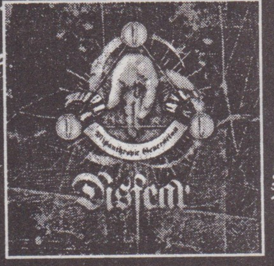

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JOHN YATES

Admit it. One of the first things that lured you to punk rock was how amazing it all looked: the fliers, records, zines, t-shirts, posters, stickers, tattoos, books, patches. This visual information and the way it's conveyed compose a rich, distinctive graphic language that grabbed us all by the eyeballs and, for most, hasn't let up much since.

As a tool of subcultural communication, punk rock graphic design, from its mid-70s origins to the present day, has been immensely instrumental in defining what punk is. Though its power and significance are almost wholly under-appreciated, the visual style, ideas, and iconography of punk have helped shape and represent its community, ideology, and overall aesthetic.

While much of punk's best graphics were created by untrained, often anonymous kids working mostly by instinct, a few consistent innovators of punk and hardcore design have emerged in the last 15 years. Among the most renowned and prolific is the tireless, steadfast John Yates.

You've seen Yates' work. His art has graced the album covers of Crass, Jawbreaker, No Means No, J Church, Jello Biafra, and Lifetime, among many others, as well as the roster of his label, Allied Recordings, now defunct after 100 releases. His groundbreaking, topical design zine *Punchline*, his book covers for AK Press, and his collected volumes *Stealworks* and *September Commando* reflect and helped spread his passion for content-rich, socially relevant, frequently satirical design. And his stark, black-and-white political posters and t-shirts were given global media exposure over the last three years from televised WTO and Iraq War protests.

Yates began working in the pre-digital era of graphics in his native England, when knowledge of the physical mechanics of the print process was as important as an understanding of balance, color, and proportion. With the advent of desktop publishing in the early 1990s, Yates trained himself on a Macintosh (around the same time as a fortuitous move to the US), applying his DIY ethic to the new technological arena. Given full reign to unleash his talents as art director at Alternative Tentacles for a decade, as well as expanding the "visual tirades" of his signature posters, his work has been viewed and appreciated worldwide.

It was partly through Yates' influence that punk graphics would evolve into their current styles, reflecting changing ideas in underground music and ethics during the course of the 90s. His striking, uncluttered compositions cut through the ubiquitous shred-and-tear collage work seen on seemingly every record, poster, and zine since 1976; his new aesthetic was clean and sharply defined, resulting in a more precise, direct, and resonant shock to the senses. Over the course of 15 years, Yates brought a distinctive set of elements to the vocabulary of punk visuals: strong, bold, unadorned typography; askew, disturbingly familiar, real-world imagery; and his own poignant, distilled, and often witty text.

The overall effect was powerful, intelligent, unpretentious—and widely copied.

Presently residing in Northern California, Yates influenced a small legion of designers in his wake, including Jon Resh of Viper Press, who interviewed him shortly after the release of Yates' third book, *Controlled Flight Intro Terrain: Stealworks Anthology 3.0* (AK Press, www.akpress.org). This newest volume of sociopolitical graphic commentary, though slightly smaller than his previous books, packs arguably the biggest wallop of all of his works. It's perhaps Yates' most impressive document, proving that his conscience, stylistic skill, and artistic conviction remain as acute and focused as ever.

Interview by Jon Resh.
Photograph of John Yates by Winni Wintermeyer.

MRR: On the most basic level, what is John Yates trying to accomplish in graphic design?

John: A response. Something from the viewer that is emotional and real. Ideally, I'd like it to be positive. Failing that, it should at least give pause, whether for aesthetic or communicative reasons. I just want to try and reach people somehow. Not in some religious sense, just in the sense of connecting on an emotional level. Oh, and world peace.

MRR: If not design, what would you be doing? How do you think you would be expressing yourself?

John: That's hard to say because all I really know is what I do, and I've been doing that since I was a teenager. The only other career I ever actually considered was being a chef, though in retrospect, I don't think I would have been suited for that line of work, as I eat little but cereal and toast. But if I had the choice now? I wouldn't mind taking a stab at writing screenplays. I have no idea if I'd be capable of doing so or not, but it's something I've thought about from time to time. Have you seen any movies lately? How hard could it be?

MRR: In making .music, one receives a fairly immediate reaction when the music is played live, often from a group of people. But in pursuits like graphic design or writing, the reaction is much more delayed, isolated, and individualized. Do you ever wish the viewer reaction was more immediate and experienced by more people?

John: Naturally, we'd all like our work—our blood, sweat, and tears—to be experienced by a larger audience. But, then again, is more better? I'm happy to get any reaction out of people, and whether immediate or not, that's the main goal I try and set for my work. Sure, there are times when you've put a lot into a project and you'd like to get feedback from someone other than those nearest and dearest to you, but that's just the nature of the beast. For the most part, you toil in complete obscurity. It still amazes me when I hear from people that have been affected by something I've created. It's a great feeling. It's not the ego stroke; it's just that it gives some worthiness to what you've spent years doing. A little reward is nice.

MRR: The vast majority of design work is to promote commercial concerns, to make people buy things. Your political work, however, is purely for the sake of communication, to express a point of view. How did you make this jump from the commercial sector into a more political and philosophical area?

John: I don't think the two approaches are necessarily that different from each other. I am in the business of selling, I'm just not selling commercial entities. I'm attempting to sell ideas and, in a perfect world, change. I have no illusions that I'm affecting anything on a mass level, but when you reach someone here and there, that's really what it's all about. When I was a young teenager looking for direction and purpose, I found something very real and meaningful that spoke to me, and that was punk. Specifically, the message it had to offer. And, through bands like Crass, it encouraged me to think for myself. Self-recognition and motivation are such powerful tools to have.

MRR: Your influence has been apparent throughout punk graphics. Do you see your style copied elsewhere in zines, record covers, posters, etc.?

John: To be honest, I really don't see myself as having any particular style, aside from the approach to my own sociopolitical graphics projects. So many folks are doing design these days, that everything begins to look the same, I guess. If there's anything I could vaguely say I've contributed to punk graphics, I guess it would be a sense of order, which sounds counter to punk sensibilities, I know. What I mean is a sense of clarity and definition, maybe? Most of my work is very clean and direct. It doesn't mess about and it serves its purpose. It's a reflection of my personality. I enjoy order. I'm a clean freak. Even my most "distressed" styles are really very orderly. Maybe someone outside of me can see it more than I do.

MRR: Given that you often use pre-existing photographs, do you have much trouble with copyrights and/or cease-and-desist orders?

John: I've only ever run afoul of the law a couple times, and that was while I was with Alternative Tentacles. They were both in relation to Biafra projects. There's a much higher scrutiny involved with a high profile artist like that, partly due to their notoriety, partly due to prior legal issues. Both cases were settled with simple cease-and-desist orders from the parties concerned. My personal work has yet to draw the attention of any interested parties. I always anticipate it, but so far, so good. Also, these days, I try and restrict myself to more obscure visual sources. Maybe that helps?

MRR: Do you think, by and large, people (especially in the punk community) appreciate the process, artistry, and power of graphic design, especially the amount of work that goes into it?

John: No, I don't. You know yourself, all too well, how much work can go into a project, and there's no way in hell we could actually bill for those kind of hours, and nor could or would a label of the caliber we work for pay for that time and effort. I just did a very simple front cover design for a band's CD. Aside from the time researching potential images to use (which can involve hours of going through books, etc.), scanning those images, cleaning them up in Photoshop, selecting appropriate typefaces, choosing a color aesthetic, designing cover mock-ups, and providing printed or electronic samples, there's also something most never understand, and that's your time. Of course, this can all depend on your standards. I am extremely methodical in the process and I take my time, when available, which is rare. In the "real" world, all that "research and development" time is billable, as they say. In our world, forget it, and that's fine, because that's not what it's all about for us. Still, I think there is a large gap in understanding between the final result and means to that end.

MRR: Do you ever see a record you designed in a record store, perhaps one you haven't worked on or seen in a while, and thought it looks vaguely familiar, only to realize you designed it? What's your reaction to seeing your own work in the context of public display?

John: It's always a little surreal. You've probably spent a good two to three weeks of your life with this entity that you now see on a shelf in a location that isn't within the confines of your own immediate work area. Once it's printed and packaged, it becomes something completely different from what it was to you previously. It has dimension and weight and has taken on an entirely different context. I generally get a sense of recognition, possibly some pride, if it's a project I'm particularly happy with, but mostly it's like being a little kid and seeing something special for the first time. It sounds foolish, but that's the way I generally feel. If it's something I wasn't particularly pleased with the first time around, the feeling doesn't really decrease with time. I still hate it, would love to buy up all the copies and destroy them in private, so know one would be the wiser.

MRR: Generally, what music do you listen to when you're designing?

John: It depends on my mood and what the work requirements are. I like to be as relaxed and undistracted as possible when working on projects, so I tend to gravitate to quieter audio fare. If I'm on a roll with a job and everything just seems to be going the way I want it, then I'll listen to anything that gets me amped. Here's what's stacked on the CD player from this week: Louis Armstrong, Hot Water Music, The Chiffons, Articles Of Faith, Interpol, Oasis, Flux Of Pink Indians, Coldplay, Strike Anywhere, Beatles, UK Subs, Coleman Hawkins, Simon and Garfunkel, the Proletariat, the Redskins, Ray Charles, and Desmond Dekker.

MRR: The amount of work you've produced is incredible. How exactly do you find the time and energy to create it all?

John: I don't do nearly as much now as I used to do. Up until the last few years I did little but work all the time. I had no life away from this computer. It was pretty sad, even though I genuinely enjoyed and never really saw it that way at the time. Others did, however, so something had to give. Putting in 14-hour days was standard for me, and I enjoyed it because it was what I loved to do, so finding the time and energy wasn't an issue. I just got to a point where I wasn't enjoying it as much. It wasn't fun any more, it was just work. So, I stepped back, saw what I was lacking in my life, and drastically reduced my workload. I'm happier now, and I genuinely enjoy design work again. I'd actually like to do more, so if anyone out there is interested is some freelance work, keep me in mind.

MRR: What designers, artists, etc., do you turn to for inspiration in your own work?

John: A variety. Some I know the names of, some I don't, I've just seen some work and it gets me amped. The obvious early influences were through punk. Gee, from Crass, Winston Smith and Biafra, Jamie Reid. When in art school I gravitated toward pop art, so folks like Lichtenstein, Warhol, Raushenburg, Johns, and Robert Indiana were influential. John Heartfield would be an historical figure. And then there's the likes of Barbara Kruger, David Carson, Art Chantry, Jason Farrel, even such dubious characters as yourself.

MRR: Who are your heroes outside of graphic design and visual art? Why?

John: My mom, and I'm absolutely serious about that. Any single mother, in fact. Why? Because raising children, especially alone, is one of the most challenging tasks a human being can undertake. Anyone that thinks outside the box. Just having the strength and the commitment to be different when all around are merely accepting their lot in life. It would be a long list, and many are so obvious it would sound *passé* to name them.

MRR: What's the most powerful single piece of graphic design you've ever seen, both within and/or outside of the punk scene?

John: That's a tough one, but if I did a very random sampling from my life to date it might read something like this: classic image of Fonda and Hopper on choppers from *Easy Rider* we had in the garage; *Banana Splits* poster I had in the early seventies; Leeds United player Peter Lorimer poster; the artwork for the movie *Jaws*; the anti-war 'Why?' image that was everywhere in Europe as a kid; the lifesize poster on my bedroom door of Debbie Harry; the cover to *Never Mind The Bollocks;* centerfold image ('Your Country Needs You') from Crass' *The Feeding Of the 5,000* (second edition); Archetypal Che image; cover of Discharge's *Never Again* single; original Roy Lichtenstein *Wham!* at the Tate in London; Hüsker Dü's *Zen Arcade* sleeve; Winston Smith's artwork at billboard scale. Then it gets kind of fuzzy until recently: the *Identity* one-sheet artwork. Like I said, this is extremely vague and erratic, but it's what I can recall, thinking back.

MRR: Did you really see your t-shirt designs from *Stealworks* or *Punchline* on prime-time news during WTO protests? What was your reaction?

John: Perhaps on the back cover synopsis of my new book, when I said they were "featured in such media outlets as *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, CNN and C-SPAN," I should have said "appeared in." But, yes, there were scenes and photos that showed participants in *Stealworks* attire. It was pretty funny and slightly surreal again. You know it's your work but then again it just feels alien, because it's out of its usual context, which is on a computer screen. I guess if you wanted to be technical, the only outlet that actually "featured" my work was when Biafra did the 2000 Green Party convention on C-SPAN wearing a "Democracy: We Deliver" shirt.

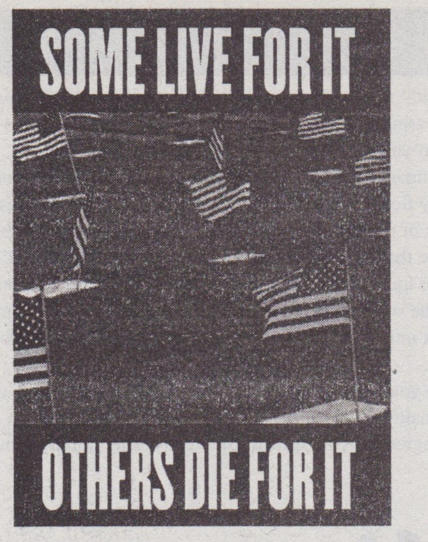
MRR: When, where, and how do you tend to get your best design ideas?

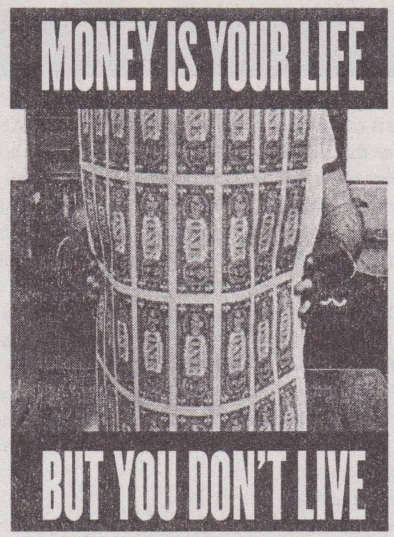
John: Stuff comes to me all the time and I tend to carry a pen and Post-It notes constantly. There's generally a steady flow of ideas if there's a strong motivational cause, like the invasion of Iraq or things of that nature. I make a lot of notes. Mostly the text comes first and I try and illustrate that later when I sit down to develop the piece I'm working on. Sometimes I'll come up with something while in conversation with others and that'll trigger an idea or the suggestion of one. I'll then go and work on it until I think I have something that not only has something to say, but that is also capable of being visually interesting, too.

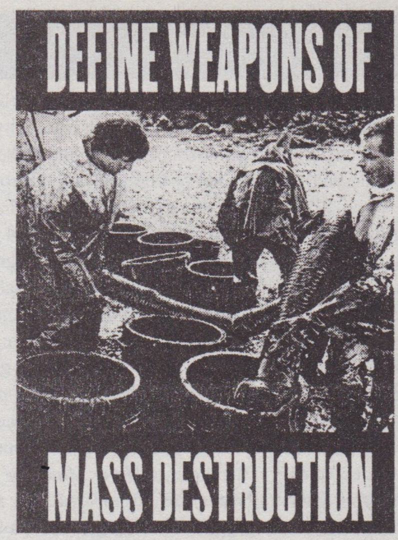
MRR: When creating a piece, do you find yourself conflicted about issues of style vs. substance, or fashion vs. functionality, such as, for instance, readability of text?

John: I suppose I do to some degree. Having grown used to working at CD format

I AM IN THE BUSINESS OF SELLING, I'M JUST NOT SELLING COMMERCIAL ENTITIES. I'M ATTEMPTING TO SELL IDEAS AND, IN A PERFECT WORLD, CHANGE. I HAVE NO ILLUSIONS THAT I'M AFFECTING ANYTHING ON A MASS LEVEL, BUT WHEN YOU REACH SOMEONE HERE AND THERE, THAT'S REALLY WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT.







size, I guess I have a tendency to work with smaller type than I probably should. I'm just used to having a small amount of space to get a lot of information into, so it doesn't seem a problem to me until I bounce it off others. The general response tends to be that the type is hard to read, so I'll go back and address that some, or I'll disagree and go my own way. I try hard to make the text and the image work together, especially with work that's for myself. When you're a hired gun, you answer to someone else and you don't always get things your own way. I will always try, and perhaps I try too hard sometimes and piss people off (I tend to do that, I'm afraid), but I always fight for what I believe in deep down. The compromise is tough sometimes. With my own work, I just answer to me, and that can be tougher than answering to someone else. I'm my own worst critic. There is very little I've done that I am genuinely comfortable with.

MRR: You've long used historical pop imagery that harkens to earlier 20th century styles and representations, often in a tongue-in-cheek, iconoclastic manner, the sort of imagery that has since been adopted by mainstream understanding as "retro" graphics. What messages did such imagery convey for you? Do those messages change now that "retro" has become such a marketable design style? What do you think of the mass acceptance of ironic "retro" images now that they're everywhere?

John: Design is cyclic, as is most everything in popular culture. When I was utilizing a retro approach to my work it was for a couple reasons. Mostly, it was because I genuinely appreciated the style and the aesthetic. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery they say, and that's essentially what it was. It was a tip of the hat to a bygone style. And it was also a way to poke fun at conventional conformity by using retro naivety. That's perhaps lost now because the retro look is just that, it's a look. There's nothing beyond the facade, it just looks cool. But that's just the way it is, I guess. You can't lose sleep over it or anything. It's not worth it. I think it's popular now because what else is out there is immensely mundane in comparison. When things aren't moving forwards, sometimes you have to go backward a little, just to make progress.

MRR: No matter how powerful the finished product, do you ever feel discouraged that all of this printed ephemera will probably end up in the garbage in the end?

John: Sure, and you'd be naive not to. But that shouldn't stop you from doing anything. Like most things in life, you never know until you've tried it, right? I don't think I'll ever be lucky enough to create a timeless piece that lives on culturally for decades, but the fact that such a possibility exists is reason enough to carry on doing what I do. I'd love to come up with a piece that becomes a symbol for a generation or something, but perhaps as good as it'll get for me is "Officer Friendly?" or "Mom, We're Home!" But so what? If any of those images can do for someone else what Crass' artwork did for me, then I'd be happy with the obscurity. To get people to think about and participate in life is a lofty ambition, for sure. So why not give it a shot with what you've got?

MRR: In creating printed pieces for the sake of communication and self-expression, do you take into account the destruction and use of natural resources in preparing the paper, inks, distribution, etc.? How does one justify (or rectify) the consumption of such resources for one's work?

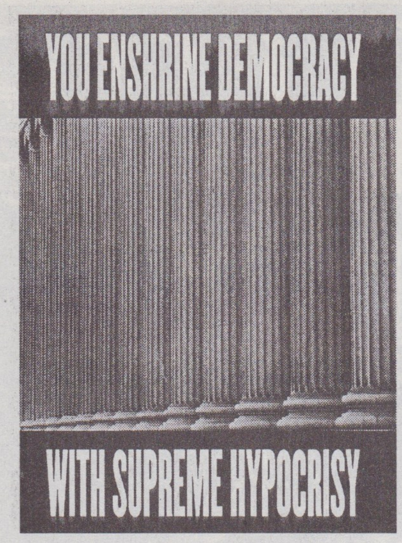
John: Yes, I do. But then again, I probably fail miserably in the attempt. I always try and utilize recycled materials with my own projects, and make use of printers who are environmentally conscious, but at the end of the day I can only make vague attempts to justify the consumption of resources for personal expression. Then again, the very nature of human existence calls into question our efforts to conserve and sustain. There's no question the planet would be better off without us, but how do you justify that? I guess I'm saying that at the end of the day all you can do is the best you can. Your approach to have a certain number of trees planted in response to your book's publishing was excellent, and shows far greater conscience than I apparently process. I do make a conscious effort to go up to trees and thank them for their sacrifice though, if that helps.

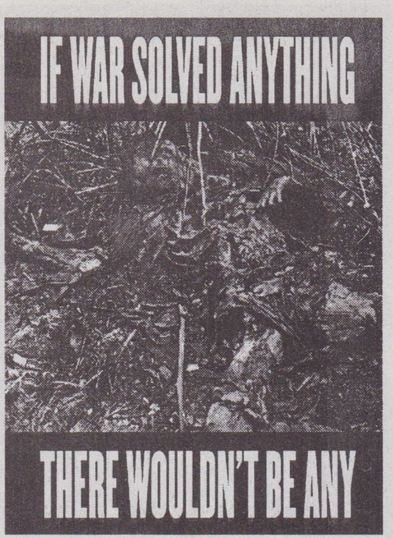
MRR: You began graphic design before the advent of digital desktop publishing, and you're now deeply entrenched and skilled in all facets of digital imaging in design with computers. From your personal standpoint, what was the transition like? How have computers changed your work, or possibly even your life?

John: Computers have certainly given the designer far greater freedom to experiment and develop. Partly due to the time saved and, therefore, available for the development of ideas. Partly due to the cost-cutting nature of working toward a project's fruition. It's no longer a series of multi-layered paste-ups, assigned Pantone colors, minimum effects requests, and hope for the best when the final films come back. It's far more immediate now and allows for greater flexibility. You have total control over the project and are not reliant on a stripping department to make your ideas a reality. It wasn't a hard transition, once I began working with computers, even though it went against most of what I learned at college back then. The most endearing aspect for me was the time factor. I'm a very impatient person and waiting is not my strongpoint. The instant result was beautiful. It worked or it didn't. If it didn't you just played around some more until it did. As for changing my life, well, I guess on the most fundamental level it provides me with a means to provide for my family. Outside of that, it is my life.

MRR: You founded and ran the record label Allied Recordings, and gave exposure and excellent production and distribution to a great many unknown bands. How was that experience? Why did you stop?

John: Running Allied for nine years was a blessing and a curse, and usually the two were the same. It's something I'll always be proud of, but now that I don't run a label anymore, I really don't miss too much about it. Mostly, I miss the endless creativity involved in being responsible for essentially designing and producing artwork for 100 releases. That's a big void to fill and it's probably the only aspect of Allied that I genuinely miss. That, and meeting some great people in the process, and foisting some good music on folks, too. The label folded primari-





ly because I just stopped enjoying it, and because the cost of continuing it would have made it impossible for me to eat or have somewhere to call home. The sad reality was that concentrating on primarily small and obscure bands used to be a good thing, with people wanting to seek out the unknown. In the wake of the commercial success of "punk" via Green Day, et al., people and outlets seemed only to desire bands that were easy to sell. No names equaled no sales equaled no Allied. I had a great run, but when the fun stops, it's generally time to move on.

MRR: What sort of direction would you like to pursue in your work that you haven't yet?

John: I've always wanted to design for the motion picture industry. I'm a collector of movie ephemera, mostly what are called one-sheets (the standard movie poster format), and that's something I think I'd be good at. That and packaging for movies on DVD, etc. I've been a movie geek since I was a little kid. I watched anything and everything I could. That translated into a combination of my two favorite pastimes, visual design and movies. So, I collect theatrical graphics. I also enjoy book design, and get a small amount of that via AK Press, who are a mainstay client of mine. And I'd someday love to be able to get grants to get my sociopolitical work onto billboards, etc.—legally.

MRR: Have you ever found yourself in a conflict of conscience, where someone was offering you a design project for a lot of money, but you didn't want to do it for whatever reason? Any jobs you've taken or errors in judgment you made that you came to regret?

John: None that I can recall. I haven't done too much in the way of work for "the man." When I worked for Jawbreaker when they were on Geffen, it was simply because they were friends and I'd done their other stuff. That was a given. I was paid, but peanuts compared to what a "real" designer would make from a label of their size. And I did work for a Sepultura record on a major, but that was because they appreciated my work from my time at Alternative Tentacles, and I agreed with what they were trying to do. On a regret level, well, most of the time that's purely from a personal angle, because I am not happy with the resulting design. Like I said, I am my own worst critic, and there's very little I've done that I can look back on fondly.

MRR: What has been the best feedback you've ever received for your work? The worst?

John: When kids write and say they have been inspired by my work, that's always immensely rewarding and makes it seem somewhat worthwhile. To understand that you've actually reached another person on an emotional level is always quite overwhelming. You get so jaded sometimes, spending most of your time thinking there's little or no point to anything you're doing, so when you get feedback in that way, it's really quite inspiring. The worst feedback? Not that this means my stuff is universally enjoyed and praised, but I have very little recollection of much negative feedback. Maybe if people hate what I do, they just don't feel it's worth the effort to sit down and let me know what they think. Who knows? I think the guitarist for Born Against totally lambasted my work years ago, but that's all I can recall.

MRR: Do you believe that graphic design, as information and art applied for the sake of mass communication, has the ability to change the course of human events on a broad scale? Or even change a person's life, as many would attest music can?

John: Changing a person's life? Yes, I do. Talking purely from my own perspective, I'd have to say it does, and did. Music had a similar effect on me, too. They were a part and parcel of the same thing for me. They were part of my awakening. They were my L-dopa. As for changing human events on a broad scale, perhaps it's more incremental? It obviously works if you look at something as mundane as McDonald's global sales from the 50s to today, but I'm not sure if that's what you meant.

MRR: What sort of stuff do you do in your off-time, when you're not designing?

John: Off-time? What's that? I gotta look into that shit. Sounds like a great theory, much like communism was, but is probably equally unattainable. Let me get back to you on that, I need to do some research, be better prepared for such quantum questions.

But seriously, I try and relax and do anything but sitting in front of this computer. Generally, that involves taking the dog out, playing soccer, watching soccer, reading about soccer, and spending time with Jen. I like to travel when I can, which by living in America means very little, unfortunately. Ironic that the "leisure society" gets fewer vacation days per year than any other industrialized nation on earth. Bollocks, if you ask me.

Hobbies used to include collecting retro toys, but I'm sworn off that these days. I still collect original movie posters, particularly from the 70s. I don't buy anywhere near as much music as I used to, but then again there's very little that excites me these days in that regard. Is it just me, or does pretty much everything musically these days sound fucking stale? It kills me. Now and again there's a bright spark, but mostly it's dull. Real dull.

I read when I get the chance, but I'm no intellect. Bloom County's as political as it gets for me, with a little Michael Moore thrown in here and there. I watch more TV than I'd like to admit, but even that's fading as a general distraction. I love going to the movies. I also watch movies on DVD, of which I have way too fucking many. The other irony in that being that I have so little "off-time," that I rarely watch more than a couple DVDs a month. That's pretty much it.

MRR: Do you really use a scalpel instead of an X-acto knife?

John: Yes, I do. They are far easier to wield, and besides, they were weapon of choice at art school in England. At least when you opened up a digit by mistake while cutting, you could kid yourself you were a budding surgeon.

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POINTING FINGER

Interview by Ricardo

MRR: Well, first of all, who are the guys behind Pointing Finger? What do you do in your everyday lives besides the band?

David: Well, right now, I play guitar in the band, Rafael plays the drums, and Diogo sings. We're a trio, just like Blink 182 and Green Day. Ha ha! No, seriously, our bassist left the band in the beginning of the year. This is the second time that we've faced the same problem. We want to take our time and put some thought in finding a replacement, because it is really hard going through line-up changes. I think we'll only put someone new in the band after the summer tour, until then Alexxx from New Winds will help us out. In response to the second part of the question, I live in Faro (Hellgarve Baby) and besides the band I study and work. I'm pursuing a major in Spanish and English language and literature. I work in a commercial record store, so I get to listen to Cristina Aguilera and Pink all day—how cool is that? Oh, and if it matters, I'm 20 years old. Rafael is 21 years old. He's living in Lisbon with his sweet girlfriend Isa, who is also our roadie whenever we go on tour. He's studying marketing and public relations. He is also a hardcore freelance drummer, he plays drums in Mad Rats (625 Records) and used to play in Time X. Finally, Diogo lives in Lisbon as well and he's studying law to become a greedy, filthy lawyer.

Diogo: I'm also 20 years old. We won't be a three-piece for much longer because our long time friend João is going to start playing with us really soon. He was kind of the Pointing Finger fifth member anyway.

MRR: The name Pointing Finger sounds a little nostalgic, if you know what I mean. It reminds me of old hardcore, with all the sing-alongs and the positivity! Is it something reflected in the spirit of the band?

David: Yeah, I guess we're a positive band. We chose the name back in 1999. I guess it was too hot that summer, because we let Rafael talk us into keeping that name. I guess it made sense at that time, but honestly now it sounds a bit silly. Yeah, it's an old school cliché name. We all love the old school bands. That's what attracted us to hardcore in the first place. Not the metal shit, but fast, simple, straightforward hardcore. Bands like Youth of Today, Gorilla Biscuits, Minor Threat, Chain of Strength, and Uniform Choice still make me shiver sometimes. I feel a lot more energy from those bands than any rock, metal, or emo band. And dude, I really like emo. Ha ha ha! But we're a posi band, we always try and have fun at shows. We also try to have positive lyrics as well.

MRR: How long have you been playing? What got you guys into punk and hardcore?

David: The band officially started rocking out in August of 1999, about four years ago. We were all high school friends and had been talking about doing a band for some time. We've been fooling around in Diogo's basement ever since Easter of that year. But it was finally after checking out two amazing Better Than a Thousand shows that we really got that kick in the ass to really start the band, to give it a 100%. The energy and inspiration that we got from that show really changed our lives. Things go back a bit earlier than that, as far as how we got into punk and hardcore. I started out listening to bands like Bad Religion, NOFX, and Green Day. Yeah, back in 1995, I used to listen to Green Day and I'm not ashamed of

it, because they opened some doors for me. Back then I was fascinated with zines and all the information about the scene. Rafael was in my class, so he showed me some records like Sick of It All, Gorilla Biscuits and Civ. Those were really great times.

Diogo: I guess I have a similar background, from Green Day to the Swedish punk scene. Then I got deeper into old school hardcore and this DIY scene. But still, I never stopped listening to Smashing Pumpkins.

MRR: I also know that in the beginning, a lot of people discovered bands such as Bad Religion, Dead Kennedys, or Cro-Mags. Some people decided to dig deeper and find out the roots of the movement, while others were just into the music and nothing more. What do you have to say about this?

Diogo: I guess that has something to do with what kind of person you are. If you're curious by nature, you'll probably want to dig into the old stuff, the hard-to-find stuff. You'll want to know how it all started and why it started. What made DC kids start straight edge? I can relate with all that stuff. So, if you like the music, if you can relate with what bands have to say and you're not someone who jumps into new trends every six months, you'll end up being a diehard hardcore kid!

MRR: How do you explain the fact that in the last couple of years, there are so many cool old school/thrash bands coming out of Portugal? Bands like Time X, Fight For Change, Mad Rats, Day of the Dead, and New Winds, as well as you? I really noticed that the majority of these bands are really into socio-political issues, a thing to praise in my opinion, because over the years I have seen those principles fade a bit within the scene.

Diogo: I think X-Acto deserves an appreciation shout-out here, because I believe that without them carrying the torch for so many years things would be a lot different. You probably wouldn't have the kids in these bands around today without them. I believe we have a strong scene. For instance, if ten or twenty kids dropped out from all of this tomorrow, the scene wouldn't die. That's something to be happy about when you're into such a small and special scene like ours! In general, our lyrics deal with more socio-political issues than most bands. We like to sing about real issues and not always about the same stuff. As you probably have noticed, most bands sing about their friends, losing their girlfriends, being pissed off and wanting to beat someone up, being betrayed by edge breakers. This is all real, but sometimes I think the bands don't feel it. They just sing about it because it's standard for the style of music they're into. We try to speak our minds about what's in our heads. One of our songs can be about Bush's crusade against evil, his war for oil, and his trying to disguise it in the media as a war for liberation, the next song can be about a broken heart, and the next about why people are so insecure concerning gay people. Our only standard for what we sing about is that it must be honest and come from within.

MRR: How do you illustrate the Portuguese scene? What do you think could change for the better?

Diogo: We need labels, real labels with conditions to improve our records. A hardcore producer with a cool studio would be nice, more clubs and more kids. I wish that our scene would stop gravitating around Lisbon. It would be cool if kids from other places would start to move their asses too. There should be less backstabbing amongst the kids. Enough of this competition between bands—if one band is successful, then we all have something to gain from it. Portugal will start to become known as a country with a strong hardcore scene! Much better than being a country that no one knows even exists.

MRR: What do you think about the war between Iraq and the US? Don't you feel it's always the same struggle around the quest for power and money?

Diogo: Yeah, sometimes I wonder how George W. Bush will be remembered in history. Will people look at him as the oil thief who wasn't even elected by the majority of American citizens? I just wish the European Union had the courage to confront the US about the real reason they attacked Iraq—but Germany, France and Russia aren't any better—they were trying to maintain their own interests and oil deals there. No one gives a flying fuck about the people who were mutilated and the parents or children murdered. War casualties, they say. I guess we're all happy that Saddam's regime ended, but I can't help but feel afraid of the way the US disrespected the United Nations. They manipulated the media to sell this war as the overthrow of a dictator, when all they were after was oil. It doesn't seem fair to me that a country can do whatever it wants to others under a false quest for democracy!

MRR: Do you have any idea of how the punk/hardcore scene is in the States? What do you feel are the main differences between the US and the European scenes?

Diogo: To be honest, I think the scene in the States is representative of the whole US society. It is a shallow, impersonal, consumerist, protectionist, and trend-driven scene. Kids consume everything they can get their hands on. EBay is hilarious. They can't see further than New York and Los Angeles—only some people know there's something in between. They worship their hardcore icons, but can't feed the band they just booked. This is the feeling I get from overseas, at least! Maybe I'm not being fair. There are tons of open-minded and inspiring bands or individuals for every stupid kid you can point out—this fanzine being one of the finest examples, no bullshit. But the ones who keep scenes alive are the kids. What I have read on message boards, in reviews, and in hardcore fanzines from these kids is nothing but brainless fashions and schemes to become the toughest, the coolest, the most hardcore. It gets me depressed! Sometimes I think I listen to the wrong kind of music. The youth crew scene in Europe seems to be exactly the same—even worse, because we try to imitate the most ridiculous things the US scene has to offer! I just wish kids would take one second to think about the meaning of sincerity, honesty, and having an open mind and applying that to daily life! All I see is privileged kids cursing the world, blaming everything they see, and hating everything, when they never had to struggle for a single thing!

MRR: I think eBay is hilarious as well. What do you think of kids spending thousands of dollars/euros on eBay for records or shirts? Don't you think that this should be more than music?

Diogo: First of all, I must say I have nothing to say about where kids waste their money. It's their money, not mine, so I couldn't care less—but still I find it amusing! When it becomes an obsession, like buying five special editions for future trades, or the need to have every color of vinyl from a certain release, it's weird. But hey, there are stupider ways to waste your money than on record collecting. When I buy a record, I want to listen to it, not just own it. There's some strange hardcore status involved in record collecting. "Hey, I own two Judge *Chung King* LPs and the Project X 7" with the fanzine." "Wow! How hardcore is that!" I just don't get it! Hardcore should be more than music and more than a record collection!

MRR: The majority of the kids in the US are way too centered on their own bands, while there are a lot of good bands with something to say around Europe, South America, Japan, and Australia. How do you think this could be changed?

Diogo: The United States produces and exports! They don't have a real "import" tradition. In other areas of culture, there's a "space" for new ideas, but in punk/hardcore there's still a lot of work to do! The only way this change could happen would be if every punk band from USA was turning into Sum 41, and every hardcore band was turning into Hatebreed. Then they would have to search for real punk/hardcore bands. Seriously now, it's a fact that US bands usually have better production and sound. They have

strong labels that work their asses off to promote the bands and distribute their records. Having a US address opens a lot of doors, even if all you have released is a crappy 7"! So we have to improve, we have to give everything we have and more, if we want to be recognized by American kids. If this "we're fine with just US bands" mentality continues, things won't change. *MRR* fights this in every issue, I must say. Man, stop asking me stuff about the USA.

MRR: I already know you've played some shows around Europe last summer. So how did your tour go? Was it cool?

Diogo: Yeah! It went really well! We pulled a small tour, about twelve shows, in order to record a 7" at Bunt Studios in Holland. So we played some shows in Western Europe, some of the highlights were Ieper and Paris. The shows had a positive vibe, people having fun. That's my kind of spirit! We just came back from a six week tour recently, much longer than last year, and also much more fun! We played some really awesome shows. The coolest thing is that we headline almost every show we play now. So the tough guys just stay home, because they know we're not good to mosh to anyway. We're really grateful to everyone who has booked a show for us, fed us, provided us shelter and supported us. It's just amazing how hardcore/punk has developed this independent network where we can rely on each other, where people who never saw us before just open their houses to us. It's awesome to be part of this!

MRR: How did you end up recording a 7" for Commitment Records?

Diogo: We sent our first demo to Robert. He was kind enough to answer us and has carried some of our stuff in his distro since then. He described us as a mix between Uniform Choice and Insted. Ha ha, we were psyched! Somehow we never lost contact, and we kept updating him on the band's progress. He loved the *Reasons not Rules* recording session a lot, but he said we had to come to Holland to record it, so that's how *Transcend* was released! I guess Robert's interest in the Portuguese scene might have helped us as well. He released Fight For Change's debut 7"s a few months before!

MRR: Have you ever considered touring the United States or South America? If you had to choose just between these places, which would it be, and why?

Diogo: I would choose South America by far. I've been to the United States before and I really loved it, but I have never been to South America. So just for the sake of curiosity, I would want to go there! Besides, I believe we would be more cherished and supported in South America, I really dig how they get things done there. Hardcore isn't a business, it's really DIY. Some of the people there really have to struggle to live and they still have an awesome scene! It's just inspiring! I appreciate and respect that! In the US, we would have ten people or so going to see us. So go figure why I would rather tour South America! (laughter) As a band, we've been thinking about it, but we would first need a release to support us. Our releases don't go that far yet. There's a chance Nick from Third Party Records will release a discography CD, but for now it's just a thought!

MRR: What are your immediate plans for the future? Any new records coming out? Do you have any tours ahead?

Diogo: We're looking, as we speak, for a nice label to release our debut full length! After so many 7"s and splits, I think it's time to take it one step further and put out an LP. Oh and we'll put out a discography CD really soon with all our 7"s plus three live show tracks. We're working on that. We just released a split 7" with Pollution from Spain—those guys remind me Ignite—and a 6-way split with Reconcile, Day of the Dead, Cinder, Odyssey, and On X Alert. As I said before, we just got back from a long tour. We played in 14 different countries, almost 40 shows. So after the tour, I think the logical step is to record a full length, but maybe we'll end up releasing another split 7" anyway. A full length would be great, any labels interested in a dedicated youth crew outfit, just drop us a line!

MRR: OK, it seems that you're pretty busy right now. You were talking about taking a step forward with the band. In your opinion, what defines a good label? And what do you think of a major label's ethics? Would you work with a big label?

Diogo: A good label is a hard working and dedicated bunch of people, or even just a kid, who promotes their bands. Someone who works fast, without mistakes, and who has a wide range of distribution! Major labels are in it for the big business. I see a difference between working with some band you like for any reason and signing a band to exploit it while it is the hype, then throw it away like some old socks. Working with a big label won't happen because we're not good enough. But would I want to? I don't know about that, maybe I would if I needed to live off of music, which right now I don't want to. But it would have to be a great deal, giving us independence, and low price CDs. Even so, I have a problem with feeling ripped off. It just bothers me. And being independent doesn't mean you're not exploiting bands, sometimes it's just on a different scale! Each case is a different one, so it's hard to generalize. Who knows, maybe in the future, I'll have my own label. I would love that!

MRR: Well, that's it guys! It was a pleasure exchanging some words with you! Good luck to you guys and with the upcoming tour! Just drop us some final lines about whatever you feel, or think as relevant.

Diogo: Thanks a lot for this, Raykar! Hey for those of you who don't know, this kid sings for the most amazing band, Day of the Dead, check them out. Keep it up

Contact:
www.pointingfinger.pt.vu
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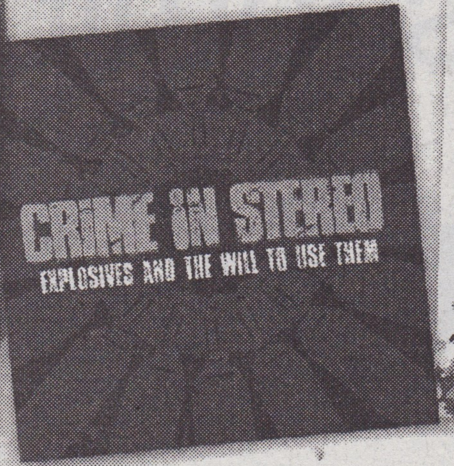

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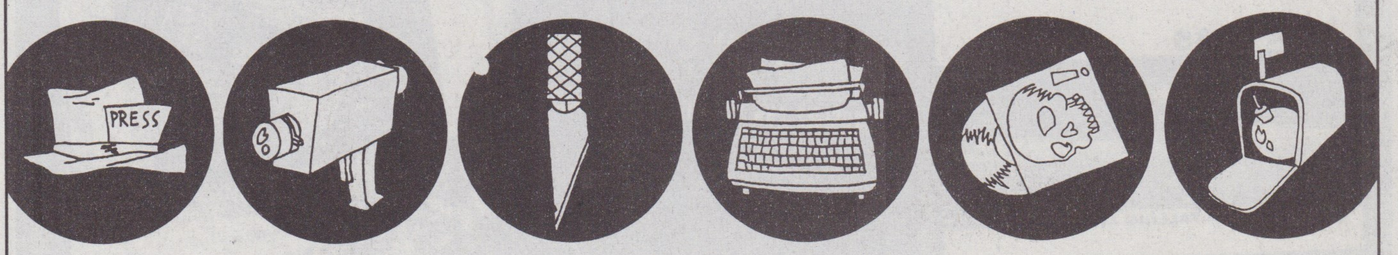

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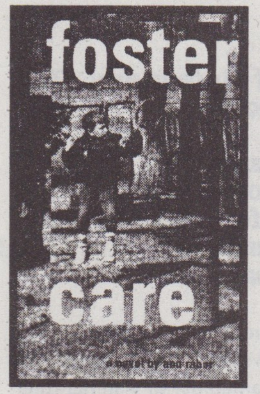


Foster Care • Ann Raber
$11.00 • 222 pages
Post-Traumatic Press
PO Box 408021
Chicago, IL 60640
kennelcough@mindspring.com

Ann Raber has created a wandering and confusing first novel that flutters around the topics of youth, family, isolation, and punk rock. But, no, no, this is not a punk rock novel. This is more like what a concerned parent would write to warn about the evils of punk rock. This is laden with the affected grammar of young adults, jokes for teens not by teens, and, and, oh—it is just not good.

Raber uses that popular contemporary writing device of the non-linear novel. Instead of artfully hooking you with parts of the story, weaving past and present in a way that soothes and subtly links up time and memories, she floods you with a deluge of jumbled years and digressions, bombards you with characters and events without properly introducing them, all the while haphazardly throwing in references to Screeching Weasel.

Meet Guy Kordell, a pizza delivery guy living in Chicago. Meet Guy Kordell, an 11-year-old delinquent into fire and playing with his friend James. Meet Guy Kordell, a ward of the state, a foster kid, a confused teen with nothing to grasp onto from his past except for a warped copy of some Screeching Weasel album. Meet Guy Kordell, a slightly odd 25-year-old who lives with his girlfriend and works part time at a punk club.

Guy and his friend James burn down a garage when Guy is 11. James goes to Southy, the really bad kids' Juvie, and Guy is shuttled off to foster care. Here he lives in a basement. While in foster care, he hangs out with the foster parents' adopted child Crady. Some time passes and Guy moves back in with his parents, who have now gotten married (but didn't live together before?) Guy goes to school. He hangs out with James's sister D and tries to find Screeching Weasel records at the local record store. He gets a car, then a job at a pizza place, then a girlfriend, El. After graduating from high school, Guy and El move into together. Guy paints his boss's living room. She takes him to a punk club. He starts working the bar and runs into the kid Crady from foster care who also works there...

...My brain hurts.

Raber is competent at creating vivid characters and scenes. The characters are real, believable, and do stick with you. The problem is what she does with them, or what she fails to have them accomplish. There is no climax, no pivotal event to rivet you.

Here is how I described the book to my friend Jake. It is like a soap opera that you watch off and on for many years. As a child you watched it on sick days at home, as a teen you watched it while high, cutting class, and as an adult you watched it religiously while unemployed. Now, years later, you have a tape that has random episodes taped in no order whatsoever: the plot and stories are familiar, but ridiculous and cheesy, hazy and a waste of time.

And what about Screeching Weasel? The band could have just as easily been any other.

—Sara Double-Ears

The Wandering Eye
Donald King
96 pages • $6.00
1942 Como Lake Avenue
PO Box 64565
Coquitlam, BC V3J 7V7
Canada
Donaldking4@yahoo.com

The Wandering Eye is a short "graphic novel," in which the reader follows Kenny as he bumbles his way through a short period in his life. During this short period, Kenny tries to scam on his friend's underage daughter, gets mixed up in some shady drug affairs, and eventually becomes a narc. All the while, there are footnotes throughout the text that refer to extra comics in the back of the book that attempt to make the story more rounded out. While this seems like a good idea in theory, the reality is that it makes the story less fluid and gives you details that you may never have wanted to know. Do you really need a transcript of the conversation between the protagonist and his friend when they talk about different actresses' breasts? I think not.

To tell you the honest truth, I had a really hard time reading this without throwing it against the wall, groaning loudly in exasperation, and rolling my eyes incessantly. The first "joke" in the book refers to statutory rape. It continues on with spurts of sexism, outright misogyny, racist stereotypes, and even a borderline racist joke. The whole tone of the book just gives me the same vibe that you get from one of those drunk assholes at a bar...not really offensive or threatening, just boring. In the introduction, King states, "I just hope you appreciate dark humor." This book isn't what I would consider dark humor. The humor (if there is any) is just dumb. I also found the story line to be weak and predictable. The art was sloppy and badly laid out, as well. I'm usually a fan of sloppy art and layouts, but this isn't pleasing to the eye at all. There's just not much that I can say about this book that would be positive or constructive, so I'll just stop right here. If your wandering eye happens to catch a glimpse of this, let it keep wandering towards something better.

—Greg Harvester

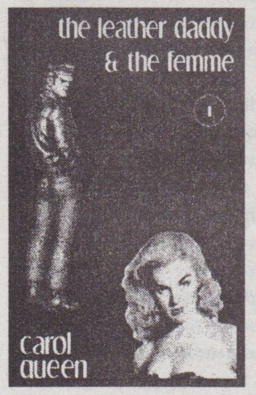
Traveling America Broke: The Life and Crimes of Joey Grether
Joey Grether
232 pages • $6.00
www.mobaction.com

Where do I start with a book like this? Joey and his skater dude friends were living in an apartment in Costa Mesa where they spent their time smoking "hella" weed and drinking expensive beer. Then, they got sick of their jobs at the multiplex and decided to take a cross-country road trip in their Volkswagen Bus. From there on out, they drive a lot and stay with their rich friends who have enough money to buys kegs of Sam Adams without flinching. If Joey and his friends find themselves out in the

cold for the night, they just hit the bar and scam on the "girlies" for a bed. Along the way, Joey works day labor, pulls sketchy age-old no-receipt scams, objectifies women, and offers the reader his pot-induced philosophies on God, weed, and "girlies." After reading about 20 pages of this, it's no wonder that his friends ditch him on the east coast and drive westward without him. Not that his friends seem any better. If I had been on this road trip with these fools, I would've jumped ship before they hit the first on-ramp. Oh, and they're never really broke.

Besides being boring, offensive, sexist, misinformed, and a complete waste of time, this book also includes philosophical meanderings about how cool it would be to "bro down" with God and smoke some herb. Maybe some of you like reading about that, but do you like reading about going to Phish concerts to hitch rides? Do you like reading books by authors that are completely homophobic? Do you like to hear two dudes bragging about how they both had sex with a 16-year-old girl and filmed it without her knowledge or consent? There's also the part where Grether talks negatively about the "white male ego complex" and in the same paragraph he tells a girl to "get the fuck out" of his house for not calling or coming over when she said she would. Oh yeah...he also calls himself an anarchist. Seriously. I won't even get into his textbook theories on American history.

Basically, fuck this shit. If you think that pot should be legalized so that everyone can be "more enlightened, bro" or if you think that rape is a funny thing to brag about or if you're a fucking privileged, god-fearing, hippy skater kid with rich parents, this may be the book for you. Personally, if you haven't guessed already, I think this book is a pile of shit. Harsh? Divisive? Maybe so, but that's not always a bad thing, you know?
—Greg Harvester



The Leather Daddy and The Femme
Carol Queen
$13.50 • 180 pages
Down There Press
938 Howard Street #101
San Francisco, CA 94103
www.goodvibes.com

Miranda is "looking pretty boyish." She's cruising the streets of San Francisco as Randy, her butch-oriented alter ego. At a stoplight she finds herself waiting next to a leather daddy (Jack) who is a real Tom of Finland-type, with his impossibly tight denim and leather. He's cruising for boys on his Harley and finds himself aroused by what he assumes is a cherubic little "effete young Cambridge faggot looking to go bad" in the car next to him. Jack ends up leading Randy to his apartment South of Market, which Randy describes as a place where "at three a.m. on any given night he could probably open his bedroom window and find a willing mouth...to piss in." The two end up having some very non-vanilla sex and so begins the adventures of *The Leather Daddy and The Femme*.

Author Carol Queen won the Firecracker Alternative Book Award for this work of erotic fiction, though probably less for her standard sex prose than for the inventive situations Queen runs her characters through. The broad spectrum of the book's sexual scenarios is noteworthy. For example, the book starts with a lesbian dressed as a man hooking up with a gay biker. A man and woman making love generally constitutes "straight sex," but Queen tweaks that notion from the get-go. From there we get to experience gay sex, lesbian sex, transgender sex, prostitution, S&M/B&D, piercings during sex, anonymous glory hole sex, orgies (which—in an unusual analogy—get compared to the perpetual motion machine Pee Wee Herman used to make toast), gang rapes, interracial sex, bathhouses, sodomy of various sorts, and rubber fetishes ("because you can hose it off when you're done"). At one point our protagonist goes home with a transsexual who lets his small dog have sex with his peehole.

The book offers a very liberal dose of very liberal sex in the very liberal city of San Francisco. Queen celebrates all this in a way that is positive and encouraging. Every sexual encounter is told with excitement and open-mindedness. She even throws in a lot of condom usage to help dull down the danger factor and enhance the benefits of a varied sex life. And not a page goes by where a cock (real or synthetic, human or K9) isn't mentioned or described or strapped-on or inserted somewhere, so the bang-to-buck ratio is pretty high.

The Leather Daddy and The Femme does a compelling job of bending gender roles, which brings it from mere "Fuck book" status to "Social Commentary With Loads Of Sex book" status.
—Craig Ums

The Best of Intentions: The AVOW Anthology
Keith Rosson
$10.00 • not paginated
Fork in the Road Press
Box 1168 • Elkford, BC
V0B 1H0 • Canada
tmalish@hotmail.com

This book is fucking incredible. The Best of Intentions: The *AVOW* Anthology is, as the name suggests, an anthology of material from the first sixteen issues of AVOW fanzine. I am ashamed to admit that I never caught the originals of this zine, dating back to 1995, so I don't know if editor Keith Rosson is on the mark or being hard on himself when he writes that there was plenty of garbage from early issues left out of this book. All I can testify to is that what made it into this anthology is over 200 pages of absolutely fucking amazing writing and artwork—thoughtful, angry, honest, well-written, beautifully laid-out, and with wonderfully nightmarish illustrations.

AVOW started as a combined punk and poetry zine, which, according to Rosson, didn't do well as either. Too much punk for the poets, and too much poetry for the punks, as the story goes. Over the past eight years, the zine moved further and further away from both those scenes, until it became primarily a collection of Rosson's art and personal stories along with a few contributions from Rosson's friends.

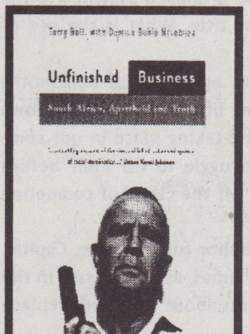
While he claims that the original vision of a punk poetry zine may have fallen by the wayside around issue #7 or so, Rosson may not realize just how much his early efforts shaped what *AVOW* would eventually become. For example, the writing—Rosson may have moved on to writing anecdotes about getting his ass kicked and how he picked up that last hangover, but he is still a poet at heart. Every word seems artfully placed and every image seems perfectly selected, whether he's describing masturbation as "a squirt and spurt offered up to the gods of adolescence" or painting a picture of a local dive bar through the sounds of the "poolballs making out and kissing each other." Even his drawings are poetic in their own right, garishly frightening, but poetic. In one cartoon, for example, Rosson's dark side is depicted as a disembodied dog's skull and spine spewing hopelessness, while the positive voice of Rosson's conscience is represented as an over-simplified child's drawing of a chicken.

As far as subject matter goes, Rosson has only included punk-related material from the first few issues, including interviews with both Kathleen Hanna and Bad Religion's Jay Bentley that are more guileless than naïve. As mentioned above, most of the material from the most recent issues is stories, presented in either prose or comic-style, with occasional writings from Rosson's friends thrown into the mix. There is a punk board game, a piece on punk superheroes and villains (Here come The Veganator and Backintheday to save us from Dog Vomit!) one of those great punk A to Z lists ("A is for angels with hands held out: friendship's last motherfucking call"), and another version of the same list done as art without words. Personal rants. A political piece or two. Weird, random humor, including a fake advice column. And throughout, art and art and art—crammed into the page gutters and poking out between paragraphs, taking up whole pages at

times. Beautiful art, beautiful images in prose. Fucking beautiful in every direction.

I could ramble on for pages about how great this zine is—about everything from the layout to the honesty and openness of Rosson's writings about the music and zine scenes to the art to the stories. But, let me simply say that this anthology is simply fucking awesome. The best pieces from one of the best zines out there. Necessary in every way.

—Doug Grime



Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid and Truth
Terry Bell, with Dumisa Buhle Ntsebeza
$26 • 352 pages
Verso
c/o 800 Keystone Industrial Park
Scranton, PA 18512
www.versobooks.com

The first publication of this book triggered the first of a series of class-action legal claims against banks and companies that profited from apartheid. This is a book that begins to confront South Africa's modern apartheid past by addressing issues that have been avoided by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Where the much-noted commission, established in 1996 to uncover this hidden history, has failed, Journalist Terry Bell and former TRC Commissioner Dumisa Buhle Ntsebeza begin. This is no attempt to deride the successes of the TRC, but a call by the authors for a deeper understanding of the past as a pathway to true reconciliation. For example, the commission made no investigation into the Afrikaner Broederbond—the secret society to which every president, prime minister, senior parliamentarian, military and police officer belonged. The AB was the "primary think tank" of the apartheid system and the major influence on its policy, and this failure has not only maintained the power of many of those complicit in abuses, but has made them beneficiaries as well.

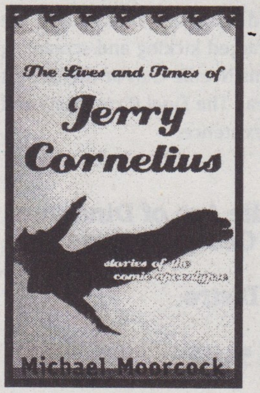
Many censored findings (subtract the 44 metric tons of records that the National Intelligence Agency destroyed in 1993 as the prospect of transition from apartheid became evident) are presented within the book's three "files." The first examines the role of the AB and the evolution of the apartheid state—the vital period of the 1960s in which apartheid's apparatuses—death squads, chemical and psychological warfare against enormous whole populations—were implemented.

The second file explains the 20th century origins of territorial designation of "black nations," reservation-style. This concept of homelands, or Bantustans—essential to the core of apartheid—is experienced through the lived experiences of Ntsebeza. Torture, imprisonment, and murder with impunity describe much of his and family and friends' immediate experience within this model.

The third file focuses on the 1980's, "the bloodiest decade," in which the consolidation of military and business links became established. A stock exchange chief, for example, suddenly becomes a brigadier general. General Magnus Malan, under P.W, describes the rationales and tactics for maintaining this system. Both, as an attempt to "win the hearts and minds of the majority of the population of the target area." The divide-and-conquer scheme signified by this phrase is illustrated by the authors with the Tricameral Commission, a co-opted version of an adult vote, as well as with the inclusion of blacks into business and the military. The bribery, terror, and blackmail characteristic of this period are also linked, in this third file, to foreign influence, and to the complicity of their media in sharing the viewpoints of the system's beneficiaries.

Unfinished Business is a valuable book, and not only for its call for true reconciliation. It is important as a work dealing with cultural amnesia and the dark side of modernization impressed upon the public. I would relate this to the work of the French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard, who relates the post-World War Two German amnesia and repression vis-à-vis the Holocaust with "the failure of Western civilization, in general, to practice anamnesis, to reflect on its constitutive inability to accept difference, otherness, and to draw the consequences from the insidious relationship between enlightenment modernity and Auschwitz (Lyotard, 'Ticket to a New Décor,' Fall 1987, p: 14-15)." In this view, National Socialism (like Apartheid) "is a singular, but not unique, case in which the narcissistic fantasies of omnipotence and superiority that haunt western modernity have come to the surface (Andreas Huyssen, Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age, p. 10)." This sweeping indictment of Western modernity aside, Bell and Ntsebeza have invaluably contributed to the organization of social memory, and for the benefit of all.

—Carl Auge



The Lives and Times of Jerry Cornelius: Michael Moorcock
273 pgs. • $15
Four Walls Eight Windows
39 West 14th Street, Room 503
New York, NY 10011

I was unfamiliar with the science fiction of Michael Moorcock until not long ago. Sure, I had grazed past the long rows of books with his name on their spines in bookstores, finding my way from Alfred Bester to Gene Wolfe (or whomever) but didn't find the necessary initiative to crack any of their covers. My formal introduction was when publisher Four Walls Eight Windows released a hefty volume titled the *Cornelius Quartet* and a copy found its way to this humble mag; I tried, liked, and was won over.

The four novels included therein (*The Final Programme, The Cure for Cancer, The English Assassin* and *The Condition of Muzak*) were published between 1965 and 1976, and offered gun-totin' adventure, absurdist yuks, and the exploits of secret-agents-on-drugs winding their way through urban hells, arctic wastes, and most points between. All starred a character that, along with sword-wielding albino price Elric, stands as one of Moorcock's more enduring creations. Jerry Cornelius: black-nailed, Swinging London hipster/arms dealer/rich kid/scientist adventurer, cracking heads, combating Giant World-Threatening Computers and dishing out ironic commentary all the while. Slightly amoral, coolly detached and willing to stoop to any low or stretch to any height, he's a neat character that some have hailed as the "first 'cyberpunk' hero," which I can stand behind.

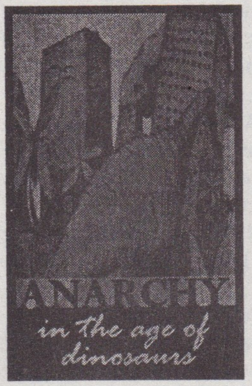
The wild-and-wooly plotlines of the Cornelius books speak to the times in which they were written: in the filmed version of The Final Programme the character bore a marked resemblance to Austin Powers, were he played by a narcoleptic goth kid held in place with Aqua Net and good intentions. Though the novels take place in the ever-popular not-so-distant-future, they were loaded with pop-cultural references to figures like the Beatles, pinball arcades, computers spitting punchcards and the U.S. war in and against Vietnam. From a modern perspective they can read as a take on a future that never happened, but came awfully close to happening just as Moorcock described.

The Lives and Times of Jerry Cornelius is a collection of short pieces (not really "short stories" in the classic sense: more like sketches) that feature the character and were published from 1969 ("The Peking Junction") at the low end and 2002 ("Firing the Cathedral") at the high. Working with shorter pieces, Moorcock must have felt that he had more room to play with the dramatic forms and structure of the stories, at least in comparison to what he could do in a 200-page novel. Newspaper quotes, footnotes, song lyrics and more break up the space and create a "collage" effect, or break up the narrative like commercials break up the narrative of a TV program. Moorcock nudges toward Burroughsian cut-ups and deadpan nuke-'em-all gallows humor, here: as I say, the form is put to its limit time and time again.

All are suggested to be read in sequence, following a thread though the course of the book. Through its chapters we're treated to Jerry Cornelius' return into a world similar to our own, with references to war (s) in Iraq and Princess Di's auto accident: he's surrounded by characters from the previous novels such as chocoholic Bishop Beesley or the lively Una Persson, hustling through a series of enigmatic enigmatic transformations and encounters. The focus on the latter stories is more explicitly political than the four novels: more of a push and pull of characters dodging Moorcock's anti-imperialist commentary and waging war, with guns and bombs, bucking up against the excesses of the 20th Century and all that jazz. "After 1980 I thought the sodding century would never end," one character remarks.

The Lives and Times of Jerry Cornelius isn't a good introduction to the character of Jerry Cornelius or, really, Moorcock's considerable talents as an author. Fans will dig it, though to my mind it doesn't totally fulfill the promise of seeing the 1965 Jerry Cornelius dragged kicking and screaming into the modern world and having to check his Needle Gun at the airport along with his Cuban Heels. Everybody else: read The Final Programme and carefully apply its lessons to your every day existence.

- Jeff A. Heermann



Anarchy in the Age of Dinosaurs
The Curious George Brigade
152 pages
Yellow Jack Distro
PO Box 244
Mosinee, WI 54455

There is a tone set in this book that resembles the starry-eyed optimism of the best punk songs. In our heart-of-hearts we know that we are not going to rush the Capitol, or even City Hall, with our mohawks held high. To sing about it, to tell the tale as if it were fate, makes our lives, and those of the people who we bullshit with, seem a touch more magical, real, and dangerous. The Curious George Brigade thrives in that narrative vehicle.

The Curious George Brigade has been known, before the publication of this book, as the collective author of a few opinion pieces about the taxonomy of protest and the composition of appropriate resistance. Their perspective would have been best described as WTO-era anarchist idealism, heavily informed by a reading of *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. That was before this book was published. Hopefully, it was with great trepidation that they published their book with Crimethinc, because no matter how positively a reader may view Crimethinc, they are likely not to be ambivalent about them. Which is to say that being published by Crimethinc is to carry a particular burden that you wouldn't otherwise have to carry.

Let's review. Crimethinc is a clique, cult, phenomenon, apparition, youth movement, political vehicle, and joke that traces its history from the American punk/hardcore music scene. Particularly from both the mid-90s Dischord-influenced "personal is political" genre and the Midwest "More than Music" fest scene, and zine-influenced reading of the Situationists and the anarchists that love them. In the seven to eight years that they have been active, they have produced very high-quality propaganda, including over 100,000 copies of the topical "Fighting for Our Lives" pamphlet, hardcore projects like the magazine Inside Front, and several books. While Crimethinc's motivations may have been pure in producing *Days of Love, Nights of War* and *Evasion*, both books have been controversial—the first for its ahistorical naming of every contra-authoritarian action of the past several hundred years as Crimethinc, the second for its apparent advocacy of a particular lifestyle as revolutionary. There have been other, more recent books published by Crimethinc that have not really risen beyond the zine origins from which they sprung.

For the Curious George Brigade, this momentum means that reading their text or understanding what they are trying to do becomes limited (or possibly benefits) by the Crimethinc brand. On to the text.

The title of the book, *Anarchy in the Age of Dinosaurs*, is also its punch line. Sadly, it ends up that the punch line comes before the joke—because there is rarely such a great theme, developed so well in the first 23 pages of a book, that ends up so disconnected from the mish-mash of good intentioned politics that comprise the rest. To state it clearly, the political aspirations of this book are not offensive—they read more like a new-age anarchism filled with dreams of what should be, proclamations of the lack of fairness in what is, and not like the promised punches to the face of politics-as-it-is promised by its alluring title. What is the age of dinosaurs?

"All around us enormous social, economic, and political behemoths lumber through destroyed environments, casting life-threatening shadows over the entire planet. There is a titanic struggle taking place in our communities as Capitalist-Rex and State-asaurus struggle to fill their bellies with more resources and power while fending off the claws of competing species such as the newly savage Pterror-dactyls."

The age of dinosaurs is a convenient metaphor for the State, Capital, and the ossified Left. This is a metaphor for our times, as it discusses in the mechanism of talking about tactics, a clear vision about what will replace the dinosaur.

"The desire for mass dictates nearly everything a dinosaur does. This insatiable lust governs not only its decisions, but also its very organization. Mass organizations, even in the presentation of themselves to others (whether potential allies or the media.) engage in a primitive chest puffing to feign that they are more massive than they actually are."

The rest of the book develops a model (without articulating it as such) of a modern resistance that follows a political line developed by the radical ephemera of today. The "traveler kid" is revised as a hobo king, a meme-machine, and a slow-moving Internet. Food not Bombs becomes decentralized infrastructure. Chaos theory is harnessed as a bureaucracy-busting social engine and as a postmodern back-story that justifies that entropy can be directed, and will be, by anarchists. The affinity group becomes a Jungian template upon which the hopes and aspirations of "real people" become mapped onto a political landscape that anarchists already live on. A form of community (called "heroic") is envisioned that bridges the "Gone to Croatan" dropout societies of the 18th century to the hypothetical communities that are forming today on train-hopping expeditions headed toward protests of acronym-laden international bodies. Consensus is re-branded as a form of consensus reality where unpopular and potentially earth-shaking ideas can be voiced because of how much love is in the room. Finally, the model is given a title, "Folk Anarchy." Folk Anarchy becomes the alpha and omega of non-ideological anarchism. It is nothing, or so the claim would be, but the statement of a folk, a people already living anarchy, a hope of a world that isn't doomed, etc, etc. In short Folk Anarchy is good because everything else, every suffix and prefix laden anarchism to date, is so bad.

There are several jabs at an elusive "armchair expert" throughout the book. The point seems to be that this "expert" doesn't actually "do" anything and therefore isn't as connected to the values of truth, goodness, or folk that the Curious George Brigade seems to be connected to. This would be in line with the general sloppy-theory-as-practice angle that the Brigade seems to favor, but seems more like an example of the American education system than a biting analysis of the intellectual. Which speaks to the book generally. This book is comprised of great material poorly digested, or as experimentation done by true believers, and not a series of fits-and-starts that possibly ekes out a solution that could be shared.

This is the worst of Crimethinc. If you agree with the conclusions, you will find the text a type of somewhat smart comfort food. If you disagree, it sounds like an exercise in anaerobic propaganda. It seems like the best advice to give to the new forms that anarchism have taken over the past few years is to stop breathing so much of your own air. The sustenance decreases over time and you sound fainter on each pass, no matter how loudly you scream.

—Aragorn!

MOVIES

FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI

CENTENNIAL MAN

It's Yasujiro Ozu's 100th birthday. In case you were wondering, this is a *very* big deal for film fans. Repertory theaters around the world have begun showing full retrospectives of his work. Hardcore fans are either nervously waiting for the movies to hit town or basking in the post-film glow.

Ozu's film career spans the silent and sound eras, and it's not hard to explain his immense appeal. (In Japan, many think of him as his country's greatest filmmaker. That includes Akira Kurosawa.) One critic put it well: Ozu could make a film about someone reading a newspaper and still make it interesting. Ozu's experiments in film narrative are the stuff of legend.

In your basic Ozu film, the camera often rests at the level of someone sitting on a tatami mat, giving you the feeling that you're relaxing in someone's home. The characters frequently speak in full figure to the camera—as if communicating directly to the viewer. And his establishing shots are famous, setting up space, time, and mood almost like family snapshots. The final effect is an intimacy of storytelling that few have been able to emulate.

For a film radical, his movies are also extremely enjoyable—and often hilarious.

Shot in only twelve days, **Record of a Tenement Gentleman** is good entry-level Ozu. Made shortly after the war in 1947, it tells the story of Otane (Choko Iida), an imposing matron who by virtue of a rigged game of pulling straws finds herself having to take care of a taciturn orphan (Hohi Aoki). After the war, rations are low and survival was hardly a forgone conclusion. That he's a prodigious bed-wetter doesn't exactly help things.

Otane gives him her best scary face (her regular face is scary enough), but the boy won't budge. She walks the boy to his hometown, Chigasaki, but he seems to have no relatives. Finally, she brings him to the beach on the pretext of collecting seashells for her, then quickly shuffles away; boy steals soon back to her side (sans shells). She even beats him for stealing her dried persimmons; but a neighbor (Chishu Ryu, a regular in Ozu's films), sheepishly admits to the crime. **Record of Tenement Gentleman** evolves into a moving and bittersweet parable on parenthood and social responsibility. The various shots of lone children morosely fishing on nearby bridges suddenly connect in their suggestive tragedy.

Ozu was famous for the "family drama," and **Late Spring** is a witty example. The lovely Noriko (Setsuko Hara, soon to be an Ozu regular) plays a working girl with a problem she's not willing to acknowledge. Now she's twenty-eight, her father and family are pushing her to get married "before it's too late."

Battle lines had been laid even between herself and her two married friends. The married women seem to have the *joi de vivre* of convicts serving a life sentence. Any of them would prefer to be free, and forever under thirty, but that's not the way things are.

The father (again, Chishu Ryu) suggests prospective grooms any chance he gets. After all, a father in Japan can't think of resting (much less dying) until his children are out of the house. All of this ingrained tradition—which makes its appearance in quintessentially Japanese motifs like Noh plays and marriage meetings—must ultimately prevail over a filial daughter, but it's almost as if both father and daughter become victims of tradition.

Late Autumn takes this theme one step further. Now, Setsuko Hara is a lovely widow with a daughter who refuses to marry so she can take care of her father. The daughter's situation is so grave that Chishu Ryu's meddlesome business associates hatch a plan: why not have one of *them* marry the lovely widow so that the daughter can be free to get married? The transparently selfish plan leads to one embarrassing (and hilarious) social blunder after another, threatening to crush everybody's plans.

This film fascinates with its complex plot and magnificent color photography. Even encroaching electric shop signs have a certain poetry—a metaphor for new ways crowding out the old.

Ozu and his longtime scriptwriter Kogo Noda had no illusions about what happened *after* marriage, either. **The Taste of Green Tea over Rice** is the arresting story of a couple who, it would seem, has little hope for a future. Mokichi (Shin Saburi) is a competent manager who ignores the deceit of his fashion-conscious wife Taeko (Michiyo Kogure), who hatches devious plots to enjoy hot spring resorts with her girlfriends. On one trip, she compares her husband to "dumbhead," a sluggish carp her friends spot at a hot spring pond. The film's climax is remarkable. For over ten unbroken minutes, in real time, the couple prepares a late-night meal as their maid sleeps; somehow, the nearly wordless sequence develops the cumulative tension of a suspense thriller. I can't really say how he does it, but the effect is like nothing you've seen in film.

Ozu abruptly changes gears with **Good Morning**, one of his most cunningly irreverent pieces. The easygoing neighbors let the local kids watch TV in their living room, which soon becomes a kind of local ground zero. Soon, their father (Ryu) forbids them to visit their neighbors, on the prescient logic that television will breed a nation of idiots.

In response, the kids go on a hunger strike and refuse to speak to anyone. Their only ongoing amusement is a daily farting contest, though they discover they have a long way to go to beat a flatulent neighbor, who works for the gas company; when he farts at home, his wife shuffles over to ask what he wants.

Good Morning is perhaps the most captivating film we have about the courtesies that fuel everyday speech. Careful viewers will discover a wealth of visual puns and in-jokes.

But many regard **Tokyo Story** as Ozu's grand achievement; the British Film Institute rated it as one of the five greatest films of all time. Two grandparents (Chieko Hagashiyama and, of course, Chishu Ryu) travel from rural Onomichi to visit their children. Trouble is, everyone is so busily involved with their businesses, travel, children, and whatnot, that their parents are, well, a nuisance. In a stroke of inspiration, they send the old couple off to a resort in Atami. ("Don't spend too much on them," one of the adult children whispers.) When the disappointed parents come back early, none of their children are willing to take them in—except their widowed daughter-in-law (Setsuko Hara), who lives in a run-down tenement. Her simple kindnesses turns out to be the only warm moments in a visit that could be the parents' last.

Tokyo Story is darker and has fewer moments of humor than many of Ozu's other films. It's also longer and demands more of its audience. Its spirit of disappointment with human selfishness makes for a series of moving sequences that helped catapult the film to world acclaim.

What really cements Ozu's reputation is the incredible consistency of his work. And he's one of the rare directors whose films refuse to date with the passage of time.

Chishu Ryu would end up having a part in nearly all the director's post-war films. He was noted for his clumsiness, so much so that Ozu would sometimes have to clear the set to make the actor feel at ease. Many think that Ryu was Ozu's on-screen alter ego.

Ozu's creative process involved retreating to his co-writer's villa for four months, running through endless bottles of sake, and writing. He conceptualized his films in his mind so thoroughly that all the actors had to do is take their spots and read their lines.

About the time of Ozu's death, his signature actress Setsuko Hara suddenly retired, against an immense public outcry and retreated to a temple in Kamakura—not far from where many of Ozu's films were shot. Like Ozu, she was unmarried, and had no children; it struck some as ironic as a woman who had such difficulty finding a marriage partner in Ozu's films should herself end up alone.

With sparkling new prints and DVDs of the director's work now in circulation, you can now begin to appreciate what that hubbub was all about.

Comments? Email me at **spinali@inbox.net**

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

ALIENS, A PUNK CAT AND A WRESTLING SANDWICH

I never would have expected to get a DVD presented by Moby sent to *MRR*. In fact, I thought whoever is behind it was making a joke. However, when I popped **Moby Presents Alien Sex Party** into my DVD player, I quickly found out it was true.

Alien Sex Party takes place in an adult video store on Christmas Eve. The new owner of the store is Joe, a former shoe model who is a bit confused and helpless when it comes to dealing with merchandise and customers. Joe has inherited the store from his sister and is having a hard time adapting to his new situation. Fortunately, he has a loyal employee, Tina, to help him out. When one of the other employees calls in sick, Tina decides to stay and help Joe handle the in-store appearance of porn star Dyanna Lauren—played by herself.

Alien Sex Party is the porn store version of **Clerks**. The filmmakers acknowledge this by having the actors comment on it—an actor portraying Kevin Smith steals videos from the store, and when Tina and her boyfriend Adam head to the store to get candy canes for the Christmas tree, they show up at a convenience store with **Clerks** actor Brian O'Halloran working behind the counter. The whole set-up is ripe for some typical Kevin Smith-type sex jokes. There are more dildo jokes than ever should be in a movie. That is balanced with a dose of discussion about healthy sex practices and a defense of every type of sexuality. There is even a part where the cast sings a song called "You Can Have Sex With Anything you Want." At times it comes off like a creepy, overly PC sex class.

There are a bunch of extras too: a making of a documentary, a short film called **Space Water Onion**, an audio track with all the songs from the film played over production stills, music videos, and director commentary. The best thing about **Alien Sex Party**, for me at least, is that it was set in my hometown of Boston, MA. The main actor, Joe, has a great Boston accent. It reminds me of a friend Randy Van Patten, an animated speaker from Southie. Someone should put the two of them in a film someday. That would freak people out.

I went to see **Tamala 2010: A Punk Cat In Space** simply because of the title. I looked at the picture of Tamala and thought, why is this cat called a punk cat? She is cute, with big eyes, wearing a leotard with leg warmers and a swim cap. Not too punk-looking, but I had some free time and the theater is around the corner from my house.

Tamala 2010: A Punk Cat In Space is the story of Tamala, a cat from Cat-Earth, who on her first birthday decides to get in her space ship and go to her birthplace, the planet Orion. She hits an asteroid field on her way and lands on the planet Q, which is inhabited by dogs and cats. Apparently Tamala's mother is a giant robot cat who is controlling the galaxy. Tamala is the only one with the power to destroy her. There is also a big brother type corporation called Catty&Co. that uses Tamala's face as its logo. Tamala takes catnaps on computers, scratches her paws on the furniture, and drinks milk like a normal cat, seemingly oblivious to her destiny.

So after watching **Tamala 2010: A Punk Cat In Space,** there is still no evidence of her being a punk cat. The music is techno. Tamala is too damn cute. Even when she swears, or asks her friend Michelangelo, "Moimoi, me very tasty. You want to eat me?" it is done so sickly cute it is unbearable. This is the first part of a trilogy, so I assume I should be left wanting more. But the whole thing bored me to tears.

It may be that I am not as obsessed with Japanese culture as other people seem to be. I followed **Tamala 2010: A Punk Cat In Space** with a DVD called **Kaiju Big Battel** that comes across as a cable access show of monster wrestling. There are the commentators called Louden Noxious, Referee Jingi, and Dino Kang Jr. There are the battles: Kung Fu Chicken Noodle vs. Club Sandwich, Los Plantanos vs. Team Space Bug, American Beetle vs. Mung Wun vs. Dusto Bunny, and Dr. Cube vs. Uchu Chu. It starts out all right, with a giant soup can fighting a giant sandwich. It's good clean fun. I don't think anyone really gets hurt. Wrestling is just not my thing.

In **Kaiju Big Battel,** everyone wrestles and the good guys win. The most enjoyable part for me was the outtakes during the credits. I enjoy watching a wrestling sandwich that cannot get in the ring. Two guys have to push him. The credits for **Kaiju Big Battel** were the longest I have ever seen. Everyone gets thanked for every little thing that may have actually been involved in this production. I suspect they made them so long to keep going over the bloopers. I am glad they did.

I have a moral problem with the film **Shattered Glass**. I don't often say that, since I can watch almost any film without a sense of moral superiority. But there was something downright evil about making **Shattered Glass**, the story of *New Republic* journalist Stephen Glass who made up all his most famous articles. It's not even a problem with what he did. After all, he did get caught. My problem is with the idea that someone can deceive so many people, get fired for it and then get paid a million dollars to sell his story to a movie company. Why would anyone want to lead an honest life?

I would like to say that my prejudices toward **Shattered Glass** disappeared once the film started. They didn't. I keep expecting editor Chuck Lane to be the one to end up looking like the bad guy and Glass to come out like the misunderstood, overly ambitious, and pushed so hard to succeed that he had to do it. Fortunately, it doesn't exactly end up that way—but he does end up getting the million dollars and a book deal, and I hear he covers news stories for *Rolling Stone*. Who would hire this guy?

Shattered Glass, as a film, is interesting. Watching the descent of Glass from promising editor and writer into a phony can be compelling. It reminds me of the office politics of almost every job I've had. There is always one guy who doesn't do any work, but kisses up to the boss and has powerful allies who defend every bit of his laziness, so he never loses his job. I know you know one too.

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to me c/o MRR, PO Box 406760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. You can also reach me by email at carolynmrr@juno.com.

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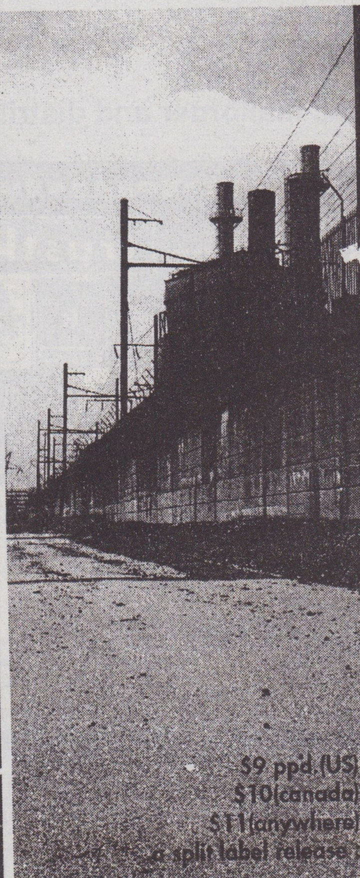

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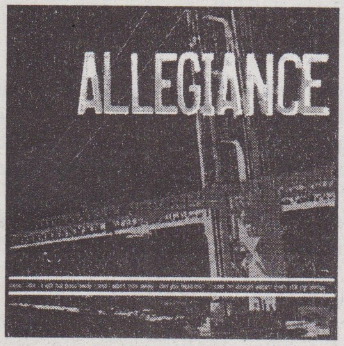
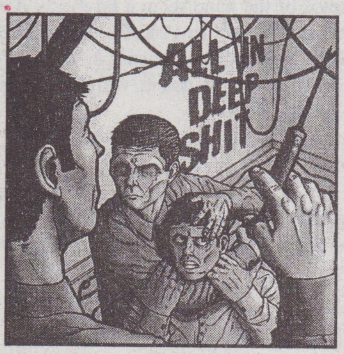


69 CHARGER / THE RIOTS – "Big Fat Music for Sleazy Men" 10"

The RIOTS do a pretty good take on the metal-tinged (cranked guitar, gruff vocals) but still basic punk rock and roll, on their side. Recommended cut: "Dirty Harry." 69 CHARGER tosses a bit of BERRY and a-billy onto their side, but their recommended cut, "Getting' Drunk," wouldn't have sounded out of place on the NEW BOMB TURKS first LP, and that's nothing to sneeze at. (DD)
(Tear It Up, PO Box 7616, 5601 JP Eindhoven, NETHERLANDS, www.tear-it-up-records.nl)

999 - "Concrete" CD

Not having been a huge 999 fan back in the day, I'm not sure if this is their third or fourth LP, or even later. But with the recent Captain Oi reissues of their first two LPs, I realized there is more to 999 than "Homicide," which is a punk classic. By this point, 999 was dabbling some in roots rock or pop, i.e. the cover of "L'il Red Riding Hood." This is still an enjoyable record, especially by today's standards. Eight bonus tracks too! VIBRATORS fans take note. (RL)
(Captain Oi)



ABODOX – "New Knife of the Berserker" CD

What the fuck's going on in Seattle? TEEN CTHULU (R.I.P., *sniff*), TION, IRON LUNG, DOOMSDAY 1999, and now ABODOX? Crazed insane destruction of what some might call black metal death or death metal math, or black death math metal, or... whatever, who cares? ABODOX! This is some deranged, freak screaming, precision vicious, powerfuckintrippin', epic doom insanity. Go, stop, go, crunch, bash, stop, screee and skronk, thrash crash, come-hither whistle, wall, crash, etc. Fans of RUINS, NAKED CITY, the aforementioned Seattle power monsters four, or COMBATWOUNDEDVETERAN pretending to be the ORCHID posing as Norwegian church-burners would be all over this like a...a Norwegian church-burner... to a ... church... Three people make this noise, and a bunch of other folx sit in for extra effects, Patty Johnson is credited with "Dolphin Scream on Track 4"! (WM)
(www.theabodox.com)

ALLEGIANCE – CD

San Francisco straight-edgers tear through thirteen tracks of moderately metallic modern hardcore with plenty of speed and mosh parts to keep the well groomed dancing the night away. Think Bridge 9, think PANIC and earlier AMERICAN NIGHTMARE. (MT)
(Anchor, PO Box #154, 3495 Cambie St., Vancouver, British Columbia V5Z 4R3, CANADA)

ALL IN DEEP SHIT – "Fuckface" EP

This is some raging fast hardcore from way down in Australia. The band goes for broke with these crazed and random chunks of blast beats, and even attempts an SSD cover. The recording is a bit raw, and in all honesty, this is a tad sloppy. But hey, in the end it was still pretty good and definitely worth a listen. (RC)
(Gash, PO Box 239, NTH Carlton 3054, Vic AUSTRALIA, davegashrec@hotmail.com)

ALTAIRA – "Weigh Your Conscience" CD

Musically, this is hard to pinpoint. ALTAIRA plays very melodic but gruff punk rock, which wouldn't surprise me if it was from Florida. Maybe I could compare them to a band like RADON, although rhythmically it reminds me more of a band like FIFTEEN. The vocals, however, are sung in an odd way,

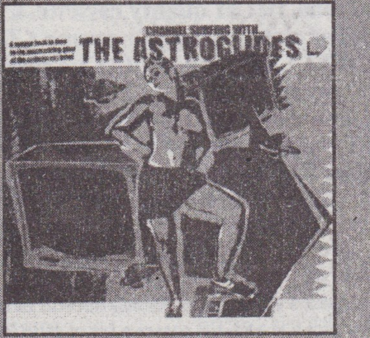
which brings to mind NAKED RAYGUN, and overall there is a big BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN vibe. I couldn't say they sound a lot like any of these bands/performers, but they show elements of each. The lyrics are nostalgic and personal. The layout on this is pretty bad and boring, but it's a fine CD. (WR)
(Attention Deficit Disorder, PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674, www.addwreckedkids.com)

ANGELVILLE – "Can't Go Home" CD

How is that that growing up on rock 'n' roll and cutting your teeth on metal would make you a hardcore punk kid? "Aggressive straight tedge-vegan" metal-core, with some dark, fast thrash-y hardcore elements, from Indianapolis, Indiana. Raw throat vocals over quick-paced pummels, thrash and crunch. Riffs are fast and the hands are X'd. Core core core. (WM)
(Happy Couples Never Last, PO Box 36997, Indianapolis, IN 46236-0997, www.hcnl.com)

ANTiSEEN / TEXAS TERRI – split EP

ANTiSEEN does the RAMONES classic "Beat on the Brat" painfully slow—sounds like a MENTORS 45 record on 33. Thank god, TEXAS TERRI takes it up a notch on the flip side with a catchy little number she calls "Dirty Action." I dig the Dirty Action baby—like JOAN JETT rock meets the LITTLE KILLERS, Decent, man. (AS)
(TKO, www.tkorecords.com)

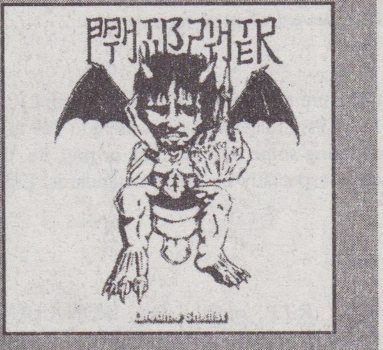


THE ASTROGLIDES – "Channel Surfing With…" EP

Latest release from Israel's answer to MAN…OR ASTROMAN? and LOST ACAPULCO, wherein they manage to throw even more diverse elements and influences (including theme music from some amusing-sounding shows produced by the Instructional Television Center) into the mix while still keeping their hand on the plough of instrumental rock. Good work. (DD)
(Fast Music, PO Box 14542, Tel-Aviv 61444, ISRAEL, www.fastmusic.co.il)

AVENGERS – "Zero Hour – June 13, 1979" LP

Later live stuff from San Francisco's AVENGERS, captured in all their youthful glory with excellent sound and loads of charisma from erstwhile punk rocker Penelope Houston and Co. Recorded at one of their final gigs, *Zero Hour* is a neat document of what were one of the earliest and bestest of American punk rock groups, and inarguably one of the finest musical powerhouses the Gray Area have ever produced. "This song's for the ladies here tonight," Penelope Houston intones, "Where are they?" The track selection sums up the band in their later days ("Cheap Tragedies," "Uh-Oh," "Misery (Finger on the Trigger)," and naturally "The American in Me." If you've never been exposed to the subtle majesty and teenage attack of the AVENGERS, then this is a swell place to begin your journey. (JH)
(Get Back/Abraxas SRl, Via Arentina, 25, 50069 Siece (Firenze) ITALY, www.abraxasrecords.com)



THE AVERSIONS – LP

This is decent, melodic punk rock, though it strikes me as being a little too polished. I'm not sure if it's the songs themselves, or if it's the packaging. The artsy photos of the band seem a bit much. And the LP comes with a CD. I suppose this is good—hell, you get two for the price of one. And the record label, Die In Style, is a "division" of World Domination Entertainment. What the hell is that all about? A "division"? I wish I didn't have to look at all this stuff. I wish that I could just concentrate on the music, which reminds me of a polished version of early DECENDENTS. See if it made my Top 10. (KK)
(Die In Style, 889 Richelieu #3, Quebec, PQ, G1R 1L1 CANADA)

AWAY FROM NOW – "Sic Semper Tyrannis" CD

Melodic emo/hardcore from Down Under. There's so much of this in the States right now it's hard for me to give 'em a chance. Not hard like good hardcore, and not catchy like good pop, this is lackluster and really doesn't do anything for me. (AD)
(Pee, PO Box238, Marden South 5070, AUSTRALIA)

BALZAC – "Out of the Light of the 13 Dark Night" LP

Total MISFITS worship here from Japan. Apparently across the Pacific these guys are a big thing, I can see why—it's well played, very catchy punk rock with kitschy horror themes wrapped up in a completely over-the-top package overkill like only the Japanese can do. Very slick picture disc that's limited to 2308 copies. (AD)
(G Force)

BATHTUB SHITTER – "Lifetime Shitlist" CD

Fourteen tracks of shit core from these fecal-obsessed Japanese freaks. Punishing, painful, and diarrhea filthy fast grindcore. A lot of neat stuff going on this disc, not at all play by the numbers grind, with lots of rock 'n' roll bits. High- and low-pitched growls about all things excrement. Quite a raging shitstorm of chaos and humor, I especially like their WITCHFINDER GENERAL cover. Good clean fun. (RR)
(www.shitjam.com)

LES BATON ROUGE – "My Body – The Pistol" CD

New York 2003, or England Rough Trade circa 1979? This band with gal vocals is creating quite a buzz. Good post punk in a true sense, a la early SIOUXSIE or THE SLITS, or even UXA.This may be lumped

in as being Riot, but this is cooler than that. Very cool! (RL)
(Elevator, PO Box 628, Bronxville, NY 10708, www.elevatormusic.com)

BETTER THAN BULLETS – "Round One" CD

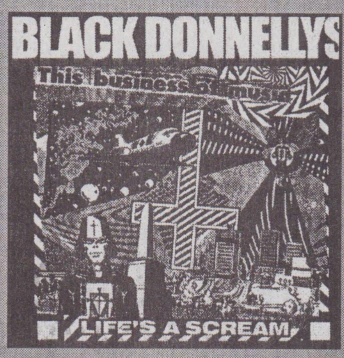
Youthful, energetic, melodic, old-school-sounding hardcore. You know, the kind where the singer is joined by the crew for the last line in each verse. It's hardly groundbreaking but is upbeat and earnest enough to be a fun enough listen. I'm sure they good to see live (AD)
(betterthanbullets.com)

BITCHIN / ONION FLAVORED RINGS – split EP

Female-fronted BITCHIN' turn in three brisk tunes all in that No Idea vein which I'm guessing you're all well familiar with by now. Five parts SAMIAM, three parts JAWBREAKER, and two parts DISCOUNT. Next up, ONION FLAVORED RINGS plays three songs, mixing an acoustic punk rock vibe with the jingle-jangle fringe power of circa 1986 British indie. All very, very nice. (SD)
(No Idea, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604)

BLACK DONNELLYS – "Life's a Scream" EP

Four songs of mid-tempo Reagan-era hardcore from Canada. Recorded in 1987, I'm not sure if this is re-issue or seeing the light of day for the first time here. I can't seem to find a trace of these guys in the *MRR* library, and I am not familiar with them. Some interesting stuff, though nothing that groundbreaking here. There is some great riffing on "Freddie's Revenge," a great track, though the lyrics about *Nightmare on Elm Street*'s Freddie seem a bit out of place after "Poor People of Poland." Fans of hardcore from this time will surely find something of interest here—it's a decent EP and a nice document. (RR)
($6 US/$7 Can.: Audio Fellatio, Brian Ram, 102 Cartier Cres, Hamilton, ON, L8W 3T8 CANADA)



BLACK ROSE DIARY – "Burned Bridges and Broken Hearts" CD

This smacks of wannabe hipster-ism though it's a self released disc without the label promoted hype so I'll give it a chance. This reminds me of groups like the EXPLOSION, LIBERTINE and those kinds of bands who seem a little more concerned with their image than tearin' shit up. Steve Albini came up with the best line for judging any music (especially in times of hyped up flavors-of-the-month), he said something along the lines of "…when it comes down to it there's only one question to ask yourself and that is *does it rock?*" Although the BLACK ROSE DIARY comes close to writing a good catchy (albeit a little glammy) punk rock (with the emphasis on rock) number on a couple of occasions, they ultimately fail to deliver the goods. They just don't rock. Sorry. (AD)
(Black Rose Diary, 4416 Perkins St. Erie, PA 16509)

BLITZ – "All-Out Attack" LP

An authority on workin' class street-rock I ain't. I can talk the talk after a case of Pabst, but I certainly can't walk the walk or defend myself when it all comes down to little *mano-a-mano* in the circle pit. Aye, I know that BLITZ were one of the premiere Oi outfits stalking the mean streets of (wherever) in the late 70s and early 80s, shave-headed tough kids whipped their fans into a frenzy with catchy tunes like "Fight to Live," "45 Revolutions," "Voice of a Generation," and most importantly "Someone's Gonna Die," which probably was the soundtrack to many a beating. That said, *All-Out Attack* is a pretty good-sounding *punk* record that boasts an incredibly bass-heavy gutter-scraping guitar sound and neato husky vocals shouted with conviction. I'm intimidated by lyrics like "you better watch out for razors in the night," but knowing that they turned into a new wave dance band later in their career lessens the threat somewhat. (JH)
(Get Back/Abraxas SRl, Via Arentina, 25, 50069 Siece (Firenze) ITALY, www.abraxasrecords.com)

BLOCKO – "Edmondson Ave." CD

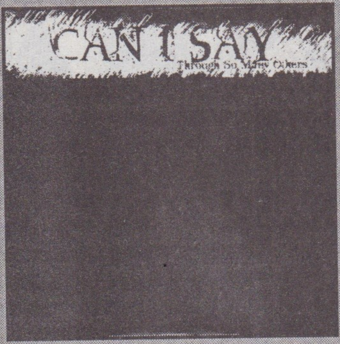
Hailing from the UK and the LEATHERFACE by-way-of MANIFESTO JUKEBOX, I EXCUSE etc. school comes BLOCKO. Melodic and relentless, they keep their controlled intensity going through eleven tracks that almost seem to merge together into one big wall of noise where the vocals take a back seat to the rolling guitars and pounding rhythm section. This is rock/pop at it's most dead pan, stripped of harmonies and quirks and although I like it—I'm a sucker for a good chorus and my taste for this stuff would lie a little more towards say, SOUTHPORT for example. Nevertheless, I'm sure this will continue to grow on me… (AD)
(Boss Tuneage, PO Box 74, Sandy, Bedfordshire, Sg19 2WB, UNITED KINGDOM)

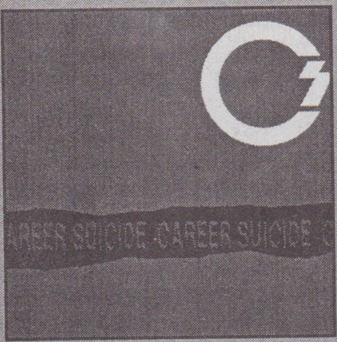
BLOODY HOLLIES - "Fire at Will" CD

Another run of the mill, guys with tattoos, wearing skinny ties, playing heavy metal that's meant to sound like garage rock. The singer has one of those falsetto Bon Scott-type voices. There are way too many wanky guitar solos. They even thank the US Marine Corps in the liner notes. (CK)
(Sympathy For The Record Industry)

BOMBSTRIKE - "Livets Laga Slocknar" EP

This record fucking rips my brain in half and violates the gaping wound!!!!!! GRAHHHH!!!!! Total hardcore assault by these dirty Swedes. Sounds like SKITSYSTEM and WOLFBRIGADE in a drinking competition. They do a darn good cover of an UUTUUS song and the 7" art involves dreadlocks and semi-automatic weapons....how fucking punk is that?! (NT)
(Yellow Dog, PO Box 550 208, 103 72 Berlin, GERMANY)





BORN/DEAD / CONSUME – "Vs." split LP

A crushing split between BORN/DEAD, from Oakland, CA, and CONSUME, hailing from Seattle, WA. BORN/DEAD upholds the tradition of such fine Bay Area groups as TALK IS POISON, CHRIST ON PARADE, and early NEUROSIS. Thick, burly hardcore, heavy and distorted, with dark pummeling riffs set against multiple, bellowing vocals damning society and this perpetual war-filled police state. Burl-core. CONSUME, on the other side, takes no prisoners with their Pacific-Nor'West style of Scandi-core, d-beat and all. Some of the thickest bass throb/chunk to be had right here set against galloping distortion and the reverbed "whaaaaa" leads one comes to expect from this d-style. The vocals have an urgency that makes the DISCHARGE Haiku lyrics, like "The city is dead/Rise from the dead" seem all the more real and now. Quality-core from both bands—you know you need this if you've read this far. (WM)

(Yellow Dog, Box 550208, D-I0372 Berlin, GERMANY, www.yellowdog.de)

DIE BOSLINGE – "Scheiss Polizestaat!" LP

Comp LP for these Austrians who released one of "those" 200-press punk 7"s in 1981. *KBD*-style, basic straightforward garage punk in the early days, more political than most other bands circa 1980—then side two has a reformed lineup from 2001 bashing their way through some new cuts. Eh at first, but then the shorter, faster songs at the end of the side ain't half bad, in a "wised up" kind of way. If you buy Rave Up stuff on sight, here's another. (RW)

(Hohnie, An Der Kuhtranke 7, 31535 Neustadt, GERMANY)

THE BRAT ATTACK - "Destruction Sound System" CD

16 tracks of fairly varied male and female fronted Canadian punk. The attack a selection of contemporary punk genres—from "street" punk, to pop-punk to more '77 sounding stuff—with plenty of vigor and enthusiasm. Their next record might be really good. (RK)

(Longshot Music, www.longshotmusic.com)

BRIS – "Sifting Through the Smoldering Ashes of Chattanooga" EP

Chaotic, raw hardcore with dual male/female vocals, screamed but not growled. It doesn't remind me of anything in particular—it's fairly generic, but well done. The no-budget recording enhances the appeal. It sounds to me as if they had fun making this. Six songs. (AM)

(Mosdos, 110 Hamilton Cir, Bremen, GA 30110)

BULLOCKS – "Ready Steady Cash" CD

Super fast, snotty catchy punk rock that in this country creeps from the basements and cellars of So Cal. Reminds me of the amped-up twisted beach punk peddled by the likes of the BROKEN BOTTLES and the SMUT PEDDLERS. It's all stenciled shirts, creepers and blokes over 30. I eat this shit up and although I've never heard of these guys before, this is some of the best of this genre I've heard recently. (TB)

(Wolverine, Kaiserswerther Straße 166, 40474 Dusseldorf, GERMANY)

BURY THE LIVING – "Burn This Fucking Nightmare" LP

Gruff, throaty vox. Grindy, fuzzy guitar. Steady drumming. Few fills. Background bass. Pissed lyrics with the largest ratio devoted to anti-war themes. Sometimes it sounds like good SLAPSHOT or INFEST. How much you wanna bet these guys rule live? (JA)

(Soul Is Cheap, PO Box 11552, Memphis, TN 38111)

CAN I SAY – "Through So Many Others" EP

Four solid songs here of melodic hardcore in the tradition that DAG NASTY started and many continue. That means that the hardcore element is never ignored, and there are enough octave chords for everyone. The influence of bands like SICK OF IT ALL and BLACK FLAG is heard in this too, and they could maybe compared to more recent bands like AVAIL or STRIKE ANYWHERE (although they're more discordant, and the vocals are more "tough guy"). There's one or two definite "emo" moments, too, but I'll leave those for you to discover. (WR)

(In A Heartbeat, 610 Brooks Rd., W. Henrietta, NY 14586)

CAREER SUICIDE – LP

I gotta tell ya, I love LPs that play at 45 RPM. Ones with 21 songs that play at 45 RPM are even better. Bratty, disaffected vocals with a fast, thrashed out band backing him up. It's kind of classic hardcore, but it's also garage-punk played at twice the speed. Distorted, messy and headache inducing. What more do I what from rock and roll? Get this album. (CK)

(Ugly Pop)

CASE OF EMERGENCY – EP

With basic-as-possible production, nearly all the tunes this six song EP come close to the searing hardcore sound of, say, early HEADCLEANERS. CASE OF EMERGENCY shows a real flair for short songs that sound like a drill-bit against rusty iron; they succeed because they're raw as shit and have a great garage aesthetic. Comes with a fold-out poster sleeve and a sticker—but no contact info that I could find. A strong release. (SS)

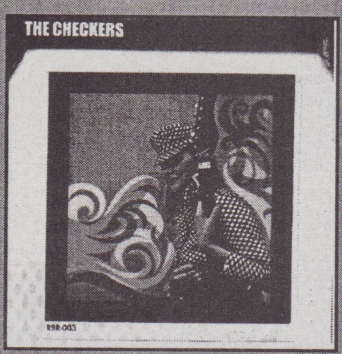
($4 ppd; Controlled By Plague, PO Box 22641, San Francisco, CA 94122)

CAUGHT RED HANDED - CD

Sub-par SCREECHING WEASEL with a nasally Fat Mike vocal intonation. If you didn't know any better, you'd probably like it. If you're thirteen, new to the genre, skate, and appreciate the finer subtleties of songs like "Urinate to Celebrate," you'd really love it. (RK)
(www.caughtredhanded.net)

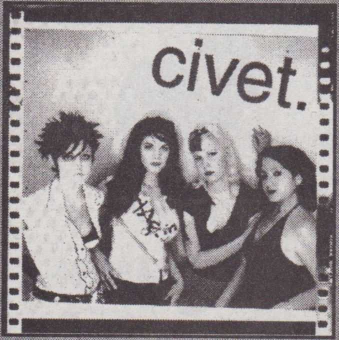
CHANNEL 3 – "After the Lights Go Out" LP

I saw CHANNEL 3 way back in the mid-80s, and they were one of LA's better (melodic) hardcore bands. Along with bands like BAD RELIGION, the DESCENDENTS, BLACK FLAG, the CIRCLE JERKS, SHATTERED FAITH…this is what Southern California hardcore was all about. I recall a friend of mine saying that he saw them recently and that they still put on an amazing show. This is a re-issue of their 1983 Posh Boy LP. It's a fine record and great example of early 80s SoCal hardcore. And it's proof that there was a time that punk rock was made almost exclusively by geeks. The inner sleeve includes lyrics, which is always a plus. (KK)
(Get Back, via Aretina 25, 50069 Sieci (Firenze), ITALY)



THE CHECKERS – "You Don't Wanna Know/The Fanatic"

…….now this is some good Los Angeles new wave….yes sir…..very slick and well written….reminds me of the old Bomp/Back Door Man singles from '79/'80…… stiff like the ZIPPERS, POP, NOW, NEEDLES AND PINS, etc…..!!!! The flipside of the single is an old FELONY cover, for those of you who own the *Valley Girl* soundtrack…..!!!!!! The female vocalist has got a nice set of pipes for this kinda style….she looks good enough to do filthy things to as well…..!!!! Get this puppy while you can kiddies….there were only 100 pressed!!!! PS Suck my dick. (SW)
(Radio Beat, www.thecheckers.net)



CIRCLE JERKS – "Live Fast, Die Young" LP

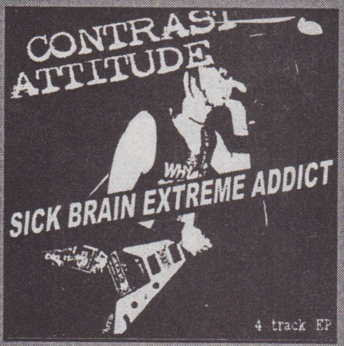
Live recordings of the four good CIRCLE JERKS songs and the other seventeen crappy numbers. If you actually like the JERKS, than buy this. It is one of the best live recordings I have ever heard. Uh, these guys were arguably one of the more important LA bands of the late 70s/early 80s influencing the thrash scene, melodic punk core and definitely being an originator of hardcore. Maybe. (JA)
(no address)

CIVET – "Cherie" CD

These sassy bombshells growl and tear through 13 punk rock ditties. They compose multi-dimensional, three chord, snotty tunes with passion and competence, but somehow they leave me unsatisfied. Maybe their songs are a bit generic and tend to be too long or maybe this should've been stripped down to a three song 7." (HM)
(Callgirl, PO Box 1827, Ximeno Ave. #221, Long Beach, CA 90815)

THE CLASH – "One Emotion" LP

This realistic-looking boot really excels as a glimpse of the CLASH from around the time of their first two LPs. While the live tracks are mostly interesting for documentary purposes (including a rare, snappy version of "Going to the Disco"), the studio material is mostly solid (though sonically less than perfect). At times, "Drug Stabbing Time" comes off more as a sax jam, though "Stay Free" has a simplicity that pushes it above the original. Six songs here are new to vinyl, but probably aren't CLASH classics. (SS)
(no address)



COCK SPARRER – "Back Home" CD

COCK SPARRER are one of my all-time favorite bands, managing to bridge the gap between the skins and the punks with their anthemic, punked-up pub rock. This CD was recorded live at the Holidays In The Sun festival 2003, which was rumored to be their last show and its 23 classic songs back to back. All eras of their career are covered, but the meat of the set comes from the classic *Shock Troops* LP (although I'm a fan of all of their LPs). From the opening of "Riot Squad" to the last notes of "We're Coming Back," these likely East End geezers prove they still have what it takes. The sound quality isn't amazing, but the energy is there from start to finish… I just wish I were there (TB)
(Captain Oi, PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 8QA, UNITED KINGDOM)

COLBOM – "Famous Last Words" EP

Four old friends get together and crank out four top notch and anthemic hardcore tracks that really bring to mind the amped up tuneage of FUEL—the punk one. Soaring and noisey guitars; solid and steady drumming and a lyrical presentation that is both passionate and angsty while maintaining it's sense of melody. While the musical presentation is fairly top notch, it's the care in the crafting of the lyrics and the sincere overt dedication of those involved with living as a threat by example against all the shit they serve that really pushes this over the top. Records like this make me proud to be a punk. (MT)
(No Idea, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604-4636)

CONTRAST ATTITUDE – "Sick Brain Extreme Addict" EP

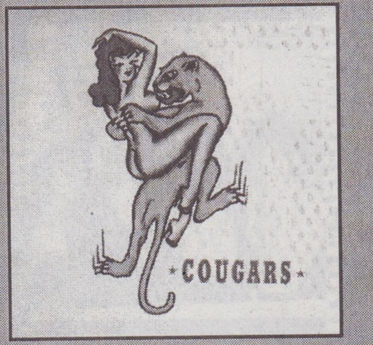
Agggggghhhh!!!! Dis-noise Attack! Survivor! Raw Shit!!! Four new blown out white noise masterpieces of d-beat fueled chaos. Probably some of the best I've heard in sometime—energy through the fucking roof and those vocals are just fucking killer—desperate, shredded vocal chords. A massive aural assault. (MT)
(MCR, 157 Kamiagu, Maizuru, Kyoto 624-0913, JAPAN, www.dance.ne.jp/~mcr)

CONTRASTE BIZARRO / NÄÛZÖ – split EP

A cool DIY release from Brazil, espousing the anarchist philosophy via the appropriate medium of hardcore punk, on a 7" EP with a twelve-page zine/lyric sheet. The lyrics are in Portuguese and are translated to English. Unfortunately, not all the text is given this treatment, but who am I to complain, as more than likely, this is meant to be spread within their immediate punk community, and I'm sure the kids in Brazil are much happier reading in their own language. CONTRASTE BIZARRO play quick-tempo crust with dual vocalists—one low, one high. The buzzsaw-styled guitar is a bit higher in the mix than I would prefer, but it in no way detracts from their crust war attack. NÄÛZÖ, on the flipside, sounds like they could've been on a BCT cassette compilation from '84 or thereabouts, featuring bands from Finland or Italy due to their manic sounding hardcore and their not-so-perfect recording, which doesn't in the least take from their energy and their catchy riffs. While not as completely over-the-top-sounding as say, CCM or KUOLEMA, they still manage to lay down some quick circle pit inducing tunes that get my head banging in time. Good stuff. (WM)
(Contra-Informacao AnarchoPunk!, a/c Julio Cesar, Rua Pe. Guerrazi 107, Sorocaba/SP, 18080-130 BRAZIL)

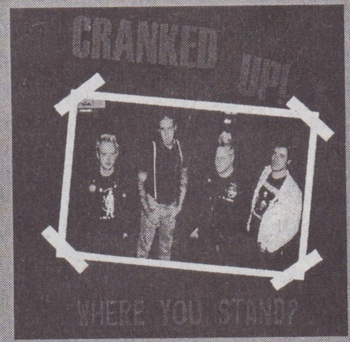
THE CONTROL – "Glasseye" CD

Full throttle hardcore, packed with lots of vigor and passion, and led with strong growling vocals kind like the singer from SICK OF IT ALL. The music is very up-tempo and the production is very full sounding. Apparently the band has broken up, so this may be their final release. Check them out while you still can. (RC)
(Go Kart, PO Box Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012, www.gokartrecords.com)



COUGARS - "Nice, Nice" CD

The COUGARS sound like four guys from San Diego driving cross-country that get in a car wreck on a Chicago free way with four guys from DC. They get out of their Vans and say "fuck our van's ruined, we might as well start a band here," and they end up sounding like ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT, meets the SORTS—complete with saxophone (and keyboards too). Not a bad sound, they're good. It's well produced, I have a feeling these guys are going places...and don't really need my help in getting there. (AS)
(Go-Kart, PO Box 20, New York, NY, 10012, www.gokartrecords.com)

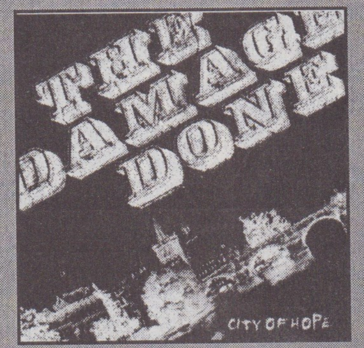


CRANKED UP! / NEON MANIACS – split EP

They should've called this split *A Punk Meeting oftThe Minds*. First off, there aren't any turntables here at *MRR* that can play a 35 RPM record. None that I've found, at least. Secondly, NEON MANIACS play the coma-toasted '77 punk boredom thing for all it's worth, checking in with two songs reminiscent of a lesser SPENT IDOLS (which I didn't even think was possible). CRANKED UP! isn't too far off, but definitely make it a point to come off as way tougher (sample lyric: "Bastard cunts keep living in mansions"). I need a shower after this. (MC)
(PO Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 92834)

CRIME IN STEREO / KILL YOUR IDOLS - split CD

These songs don't do much for me, but these guys are holding their ground—and so I've got to give KILL YOUR IDOLS some props for sticking to what they do. Here they deliver three rock solid tracks of tough, melodic hardcore, one of which being a SHEER TERROR cover (which I find to be pretty fucking great). Fans of KILL YOUR IDOLS won't be let down. CRIME IN STEREO plays a similar style of hardcore with these three well written, tough, energetic, youth-crew anthems. But lean more towards the pop side of things with tons of sappy melodic vocal hooks and guitar leads... Imagine an angrier LIFETIME, or the first SAVES THE DAY LP. Well, they're not that good, but it's worth checking out. (VH)
(Blackout, www.blackoutrecords.com)



CRIPPLE BASTARDS – "Desperately Insensitive" LP

By now, I assume many already know of Italy's long-running hate and bitter bile crew CRIPPLE BASTARDS after last years troubles they had at the ABC NO RIO in NYC. While I don't feel the need for myself to go into who is right or wrong or neither, I would like to point out that it's getting old hearing about it and the continued shit being spread by CRIPPLE BASTARDS about it just makes them seem like little crybabies who can't/won't move on. This happened early in 2002 and every time I hear anything from CB anymore this is being mentioned by them, as it is this time with their song "Bomb ABC No Rio." Sigh. Aside from that, this record drastically ups the ante proffered by their last full length LP, the amazing *Misantropo A Senso Unico* and their more recent split 7" with Japan's mighty crush-masters of doom, CORRUPTED. The recording here is excellent, the songs are varied enough that there is definite distinction between songs—not all of them being a blur of one song to the next—and the vicious brutality of their style has been refined into total audio destruction that, in my humble opinion, puts them square on top of the current world grind scene. If you're a CB or grind fan you probably already have this or will soon. (WM)
(Deep Six, PO Box 6911, Burbank, CA 91510)

DOA – "War and Peace" CD

A best of 25th anniversary collection here. Includes some of the early great stuff and a sampling of everything since. DOA, from Canada, was one of the best punk bands back in the day. Starting in 1978 and going on to 2001, this is a good collection if you don't have the later releases. If you don't have their *Hardcore '81*, *Something Better Change*, and the singles-heavy *Dawning of a New Error* full-lengths, you are not a punk rocker, you are a poseur. (RL)
(Sudden Death, Cascades PO Box 43001, Burnaby, BC, V5G 3H0, CANADA)

THE DAMAGE DONE – "City of Hope" CD

It seems like I keep saying this every time I talk about this band, but this is head and shoulders above their last record. Kyle's vocals have done a complete 180, which makes me wonder why he wasn't singing like this all along. Sure the song structures got a little better, and the lyrics are as sincere and heartfelt as anything Kyle has done in the past, but holy shit his voice is good. This band was just about to hit their prime. This release coupled with their last few shows were proof that the damage was done too early. I know Kyle is focused on Rival, but he should seriously look into fronting a new band with pipes like these. (CC)
(Rival, PO Box 5242, Concord, CA 94524, www.rivalrecords.net)

DANMUSH - "From Here...." CD

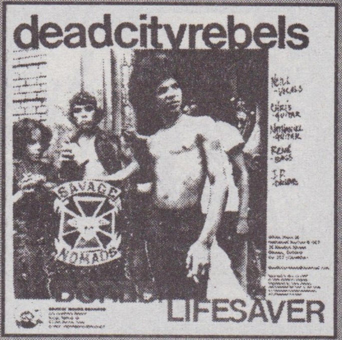
Damn, this CD is good... Not just good—really good. DANMUSH hail from the land of the rising sun and have ex-members of the GAIA and SINK. The sound is very similar to the former bands, but on first listen I kept thinking of MELT BANANA playing a more traditional style, without the trippy dippy parts that scare me. I am already on my fifth listen of this little monster of a disc, and I am enjoying every second. (NT)
(Sound Pollution, PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017)

DARLINGTON – "All the Wrong Moves" CD

I don't mind DARLINGTON, but they seem to play things a little too by-the-numbers to really stick out, but they continue to find labels to put out their many releases. Syrupy sweet pop punk that although doesn't offend, fails also to inspire. (AD)
(Whoa Oh, 52 McLoughlin St, Glen Cove, NY 11542)

DAYCARE SWINDLERS – "This is No Way to Make a Living" CD

I like this band, sure they write some dodgy ska songs but even those have some good choruses. I reviewed their first album three or four years ago and I actually thought they were heading for the big time. Well, they didn't hit it big, hence the title of this collection of bits-and-bobs from the last four years. The bad thing about the DAYCARE SWINDLERS is that they seem to be a band with a lack of direction, they're not a hardcore band, they're not a ska band, and they're not a straight punk band or a pop-punk band...now there's nothing wrong with variety but it can be detrimental if it stops you from grasping and refining a sound. Nevertheless I still like them, they leave it all on the field, to use a sports metaphor, and are way better than the phony young "punk" bands you see on music television. Tracks like "Prison Song," "Crystal Meth" are anthems worthy of any part mix tape, and "American Holy War" (probably their best track) shows that they actually have a brain. I hope they keep at it. (AD)
(Vile Beat, www.vilebeat.com)



DEAD CITY REBELS / HIGH SCHOOL ROCKERS – split EP

THE HIGH SCHOOL ROCKERS spit out a couple of real old school rockers. Get it? Really, this is faster paced, somewhat frantic, '77-style punk rock. They somehow manage to keep the old school spirit without sounding like a retro band. These guys have put out a couple of things prior to this, one of which I went to great lengths to acquire for my personal collection. The two tracks here are of the same quality. The DEAD CITY REBELS play a similar style of catchy, up-tempo punk. It is perhaps a little more catchy, with some infectious guitar licks. I think it is fair to say that both these bands are familiar with the STOOGES. Highest recommendation. (KK)
(Rockin' Bones c/o Gualtiero Pagani, Borgo Palmia 3A, 43100 Parma, ITALY)

DEFCON 4 – CD

Medium fast technical tough guy shit. Jazzy. Pukey. Sometimes CHRIST ON PARADE-y. Is that a joke about homeless people, or are you just stupid? Not to mention the almost offhand remarks about rape not being rape. Am I the stupid one, or am I missing something here? (JA)
(Rodent Popscicle, www.rodentpopsiclerecords.com)

DEFIANCE – "Against the Law" EP

Longstanding spiky tops with more studs than should be allowed. Weird to see them move from the basements to the spiky top tour circus, but that's progress I guess. The music remains hard as nails fiercely political sing-a-long punk with both Doc Martens planted firmly in dirty England circa '82. Maybe not as hardcore as before (more VIRUS than AUS ROTTEN), and a little more fists in the air. Good stuff (would be great if they lost the fucking guitar solos). (TB)
(Dirty Faces)

DESASTRE - "Mundo Velho" EP

We have some downright ripping, raw as hell, d-beat attack from these Brazilians. If you like to wear four belts, dance around your room screaming political lyrics in foreign languages as your heart is d-beating, and spend days stenciling "Discharge" onto your leather, you will be very happy having this record among the other classics in your collection. They try to confuse our geographical sensibilities by hailing from Brazil, playing total scandi-land d-beat, and putting out a 7" on a Swedish label. It's mind-boggling! *Mind-boggling!* (NT)
(Shit Peace and Tofu, Amiralgatan 1, Box 83, 211 41 Malmo, SWEDEN)

DIE SCHWARZEN SCHAFE - "Auf Der Suche Nach Dem Licht" CD

One of the things I like most about the majority of German bands is that they sound, well, distinct-

ly, er, German. Here we have a bunch of older chaps bashing out some engagingly catchy sing-a-long (if you speak the lingo, of course) punk. Think classic SCREECHING WEASEL rubbing shoulders with SHAM 69 at a SLIME show. Yup, it's that good. Not since DIE WALTER ELF has Germany shone so. (RK)
(Plastic Bomb, www.plasticbomb.de)

DINA – "Work the Switch" CD

I was surprised to find out that this band is not from the Midwest—they're from the UK! They play "emo" pop and, thankfully, they do it well, without sounding too cliché or just downright annoying like most of the new bands I hear that sound like this. Musically I would put them somewhere between GET UP KIDS, JIMMY EAT WORLD, and maybe the WEAKERTHANS (though that's a stretch). The lyrics are a bit sappy, but I appreciate that they're not overdramatic. There's some really cool musical ideas on here, which, I feel just fall a little short of whatever they're trying to be. Overall, a pretty good album. (WR)
(JSNTGM, PO Box 1025, Blackpool, FY3 0FA, UK, www.jsntgm.com)

DISARM - "Discografia 1997–2001" CD

Need we tell you DISARM is of the holy tradition of DIS, as originally created over twenty years ago by four black leather-clad lads from Stoke-On-Trent, England, filtered through Sweden, over to Brazil, and then back and forth again and again? We might need to inform you that DISARM is from Brazil and all the lyrics are in Portuguese. We shouldn't have to point out that this CD is a discography covering the years 1997 to 2001. The tracks cover two demos (cassette and CDR), a split LP, and a 7"—totaling 26 songs in just under an hour. That you might not have known. Please do know that fans of ARMAGEDOM, SCUM NOISE, DRILLER KILLER, WOLFPACK, VARUKERS, DIS- et al, would be all over this like a drunk punk to cider. (WM)
(Buchos Discos, Caixa Postal 12, CEP: 09015-970, Santo André-SP - BRAZIL, www.buchodiscos.hpg.com.br)

DOGS – "Suburban Nightmare" CD

New release from the power trio that put out the *KBD* mainstay "Slash Your Face" on an indie single back in the later 70s. All things considered it sounds far better than it has any right to, and doesn't sound out of place next to the recent live record that captured the band in their heyday…also on Dionysus, wasn't it? It's got a certain grizzled biker-worn down-by-the-world quality to it that power-violence mavens won't appreciate, but DOGS fans (or admirers of the HUMPERS or CREAMERS) should enjoy. (JH)
(Dionysus, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507, www.dionysusrecords.com)

LOS DOLARES / SIN APOYO – "Contra Esta Guerra Y Contra Esta Paz" split EP

Two top notch new bands from South America find their way onto this pointedly anti-war split. Los Dolares, from Venezuela, offer up two very catchy and very raw mid-paced attacks that have a definate UK '77 flavor to them—sounding a good deal like Spain's FAMILIA REAL. SIN APOYO, on the flip, tear through three ragers of Chilean hardcore—raw, angry and totally pissed. Fucking great! (MT)
(Noseke, c/o Johnny Castro, A.P. 64670, Z.P. 1064-A, Caracas, VENEZUELA, apatia_no@hotmail.com)

DOOM BUGGY – "Versus the Beast" CD

Wanna like. I like their desire and their instincts, but the songs aren't there yet for them. They like the arty sound, they like weirdness, they have a decent indie rock take, but after the CD finishes, I can't remember any of their tunes. We are looking for *peak experiences* here, fellas! (RW)
(Noisemaker, PO Box 71208, Shorewood, WI 53211)

DRAGNET - "We're all Cutthroats" LP

Dragnet follows up their 7" with a completely solid album of hardcore punk tunes in the same league of TEAR IT UP of DOWN IN FLAMES. Lots of personal lyrics about depression and imagery of slit wrists. BLACK FLAG pulled off the whole "life is pain" thing much better, but I will let it slide. A completely enjoyable album that features the funniest lyrics of the month: "we're being mindfucked, as America's corporations are lubing up their cocks." That alone makes it a brilliant album. (NT)
(Dead Alive, PO Box 42593, PA 19101)

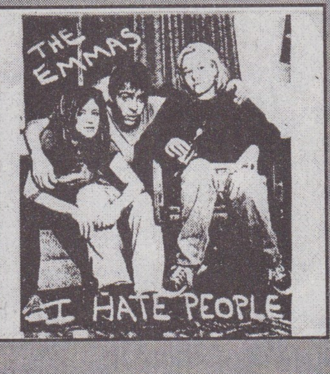
DURANGO 95 – "Take Me Away" CD

Second band from Dusseldorf to blow me away this month. This fucking rips. Totally catchy woah-oh laden punk a hardcore edge. Like WASTED from Finland mixed with KID DYNAMITE or the EXPLOSION but without any of the tight jeans, shaggy haired hipness of the later bands. I wish we got more stuff with this much balls and energy through these parts. As they say "Hooray for Punk Rock", couldn't agree more. Ripping. (TB)
(www.durango95.de)

EMMAS – "I Hate People" EP

This EP is charmingly amateurish, almost incompetent, trashy punk and roll. The spirit of SUPERCHARGER lives on. These three can't play a lick. They bash 'em out sloppy and loud. "This is our first time playing, so fuck you" greets you when you drop the needle on the first track, "I Hate People." There are great screamy female vocals dripping with bad attitude and a sidesplitting guitar solo. I love it. The next four songs don't fare as well. Each track grates a bit more than the previous. "Joel's Song" is a bit hard to take and even

after repeated listens, I couldn't quite get a handle on it. Worth it for "I Hate People" alone, you can get this piece of DIY trash (300 pressed) from the EMMAS, address below. (RR)
(www.theemmasdenver.com)



FALL – "Formerly Country on the Click" LP

Who woulda thunk that *MRR* would ever get to review a new FALL LP, but that's a testament to the man's label-jumping dexterity. I haven't really liked a FALL record all the way through since *Middle Class Revolt*, but this is a solid winner. Somehow, M.E.S. has got the fucking sock out of his mug, so that the lyrics have some damn force behind them like in the old days. There ain't much of that rockabilly hep anymore, but he *has* dumped all the HAPPY MONDAYS beep-beep crap so we are basically back to the mid-80s again. It is a stark, cold record, unlike any of his others—when I say "old days" I don't mean a rehashing of old themes. For the first time in a while, I don't lift the needle and jump to the next track. As a committed FALL fanatic, I'm gonna want to listen to this a few dozen more times, but the fact that I want to means it's a great LP. (RW)
(Action, www.action-records.co.uk)

FAR LEFT LIMIT – "Paint It Black" EP

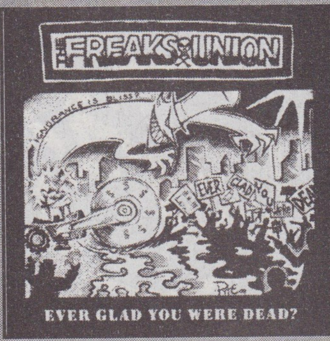
Fuck, the hot rock on the other side of the globe is blowing up right now. I've reviewed a few doozies from down that way recently, but this is by far away the best. Fast as shit, rough hardcore…very similar to what was coming out of here a few years back before everyone grew their hair and went rock (DOWN IN FLAMES, LIFES HALT, etc). Great insightful political lyrics too which just add to a great package (beats hearing about so called punks bleating about broken hearts and the like). (TB)
(625, PO Box 423413, San Francisco, CA 94142-3413)

FLAT STANLEY - "An Album Cover" CD

This takes a song or two to kick in, but when it does—lo and behold, some glorious melodic hardcore. Like how they used to do it in the good old days, when HÜSKER DÜ where everyone's inspiration/aspiration. Reminds me a lot of LIFETIME, and V CARD, with lots of the great metallic (though not metal) guitar that …LIFE BUT HOW TO LIVE IT used to whip up. Really, really good. (RK)
(Amp, www.amprecords.com)

FLUX OF PINK INDIANS / EPILEPTICS - "Fits and Starts" CD

FLUX OF PINK OF INDIANS were—after CRASS and CONFLICT—probably the most popular of the early 80s Brit anarcho bands. This collection includes their EP on Crass Records (with the legendary *Tube Disasters*—perhaps, along with the UK SUBS' "Warhead" the most popular cover song of UK punk bands ever), a few unreleased demo tracks, and various EP, demo and live tracks from the EPILEPTICS, the precursor to FLUX, and a brilliant, quintessential PUNK band that only the UK could produce in the late 70s. Punk as fuck, and proud of it. The selection of the EPILEPTICS tracks is a little odd, and there is a much wider collection on the *Overground* CD which is well worth tracking down, but regardless, for the uninitiated, this is an incredible introduction to one of the bestest, and most influential (respectively) bands that the UK has ever produced. (RK)
(Doctor Strange, www.drstrange.com)



THE FREAKS UNION – "Ever Glad You Were Dead?" CD

Poppy street punk from a time when metal wasn't punk. The time is now. From the first "Go!" to the driving bass lines, this screaming chorus laden English band does it right, with influences as broad as SCREECHING WEASEL to SUBHUMANS. You dread mullets and you mohawks will love this. Even the ska song isn't bad. (JA)
(Town Clock, 39 Station Road, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, Y07 1QH, UNITED KINGDOM)

FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS – "Tick-Tick-Tick-Tick/1-900-Get-Inside"

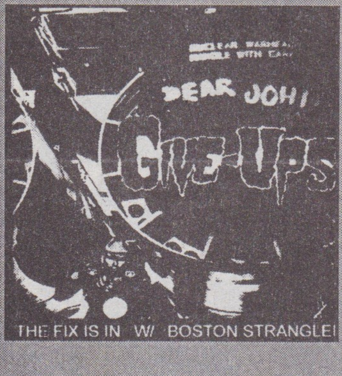
Over and done with in the blink of an eye…like dropping a quarter into some short-circuited arcade game and crashing your spaceship twenty seconds into the game. The FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS are punk rock blender noise that stays utterly incomprehensible to the last…fun for a quick spin, though. A real stylus-wrecker. (JH)
(Goodbye Boozy, via Villa Popetti, 147, 64020 S. Nicolò (TE) ITALY, goodbyeboozy@tin.it)

THE FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS – LP

Impressive as their first single was, there wasn't a trace of this album's greatness on that (now obsolete) slab. The Functional Blackouts are cut from the same powdered narcotic as bands like CLONE DEFECTS or FINAL SOLUTIONS: Very rude, very raw, very noisy punk. Naturally (or perhaps not), they unleash some of the finest ultra-punk (new genre?) damage (overdone genre?) I've heard in nearly two hours. File next to any of the fantastic current Midwestern bands that want to kill you by death. (MC)
(Criminal IQ, 3540 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657)

FUNERAL DINER / DEAD CITY – split LP

FUNERAL DINER are back with their hoarse throat, angsty, yet soulful brand of emo-core (sounds like RIGHTS OF SPRING and GREY MATTER). Good stuff here, these guys definitely stick out among this genre. DEAD CITY on the flipside are heavier and more into the dramatic style ballads that NEUROSIS is sort of famous for. They've even got a violin (or a keyboard simulated one)…very NEUROSIS. One out of the four songs does actually kick in and rock out in a kind of dirge-y early FROM ASHES RISE way. I'd get this



record for the FUNERAL DINER side. (AS)
(Old Glory, c/o Jonathan Lee, PO Box 3678, Memphis, TN, 38170-0678, oldglorious@yahoo.com)

THE FUSE! – "The Fisherman's Wife" LP
Ugh!!! The Now sound! Enough is enough already! I feel bad trashing these guys, I mean this record, a noisy melding of mod and punk stylings, is full of loads of energy—energy and spirit to burn, actually. They're probably great live, and nice kids I would imagine, but still, a million and one bands with this all-of-a-sudden trendy, noisy post punk sound—angular guitars, choppy rhythms and call and response vocals—is just a bit much to take. Fuck, KARATE PARTY was doing this shit years ago, a hell of a lot better, and no one gave a fuck. A few years ago everyone wanted to be the STITCHES, then the LOST SOUNDS, now everyone wants to be fuckin' LE SHOK, for god's sake. Any comparisons to the FALL or GANG OF FOUR are just plain wrong. Indie rock for college students, infused with a bit of punk spirit, is what this is. File next to your POPULAR SHAPES, INTELLIGENCE, A-FRAMES, blah blah records. You've probably already bought it, but if not you can get it from In the Red. (RR)
(In the Red, PO Box 50777, Los Angeles, CA 90050)

GIVE-UPS / VM COLLISION - split EP
This is a double-decker turd sammich. VM COLLISION has three poorly recorded NOFX / BLINK-y / self-reflective-SCREECHING WEASEL (they even use the line "it's just like Ben Weasel said..." right before they break into the end of "I Wrote Holden Caulfield" to drive home the point—which totally escapes me by the way). The GIVE-UPS do that RAMONES thing really poorly. God, why have you forsaken me? (BM)
(Say-Ten, PO Box 7586, Newark, DE 19714-7586, www.saytenrecords.com)

THE G-MEN - "Rehab's for Quitters" CD
Pretty raw, straight-ahead street-punk, hailing from the mean streets (or is that alleys!?) of Toronto. RESTARTS and TURBONEGRO covers largely expose how pedestrian and unimaginative their own songs are. Not terrible, just insipid. (RK)
(October 32nd, 521 Queen Street West, Suite 201, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 2B4, CANADA)

THE GOD AWFULS – "Next Stop Armageddon" CD
Good UK-ish punk rock circa 1979 by these SoCal folk. Kinda like the poppier RANCID and US BOMBS, without the ultra-scratchy vocals. Good sound, good enough tunes, decent new band—we'll have to see if they can stand out in this crowded genre. (RL)
(Kung Fu, www.thegodawfuls.com)

GOLD STARS – CD
Fun stuff that suits my weary mental state (right now, at least). Again, it's that kinda jaunty SAM THE SHAM sorta 60s roller-rink rock 'n' roll that steers clear of carefully crafted artistic statements and piles on the thrills with tracks like "Babblin' Brook", "I Think I'm Down", "Oh Yeah!" and the like. Great organ, a winner all around yep. (JH)
(Pravda, PO Box 268043, Chicago, IL 60626, www.pravdamusic.com)

GRIZZLY ADAMS BAND – "In-Flight Entertainment" LP
The GRIZZLYS are a German garage band. That's what you're looking for, so let's get that out of the way right off the bat. They like Schnitzel and beer, but apparently aren't big on fidelity or polished production. That's OK with me. They remind me of TURBONEGRO at times, in the vocal delivery, and the DIRTSHAKES in German boogaloo ability, but it has to be said that they are also very well schooled in the Greg Lowery-ology ("I wanna be like Steve McQueen/hey yeah yeah yeah/I wanna be like James Dean/Cutest gay guy I've ever seen.") Snotty, Foreign. Frantic. Fun. Very good stuff. (BM)
(Stereodriver, Von-Steuben-Str. 17, 48143 Muenster, GERMANY, stereodrive@greenhell.de, www.,greenhell.de)

HK / PLEDGE ALLIANCE – split CD
The Franco-Germanik allegiance of the new millennium: HK from France and PLEDGE ALLIANCE from Austria. Their music is of the metallic hardcore vein, slightly tech, of groups such as BOTCH or KNUT—in the case of HK—and PLEDGE ALLIANCE is in the style of early CATHARSIS—metal played by punks—or even a slowed down ACME. The lyrics and liner notes are in French and German and that have been kindly translated to English. It makes it kind of confusing to figure out what's going on in some places but it does make for some cool-looking design—the packaging gets a thumbs up. Both bands are good and deserving of attention for fans of this style. (WM)
(Impure Muzik, 19 Faubourg Tarragnaz, 25000 Besançon, FRANCE, www.impuremuzik.com)

HAMMER – "Raw Tracks 2000" EP
The name really says it all... This is the kind of devastatingly raw Japanese hardcore that you cannot possibly ever get enough of. Courtesy of Deranged, these dirty, unpolished demo recordings are packed with energy and intensity. They sound perfect. Very much melodic, sing-along oriented, and catchy, but uncompromisingly harsh and furious. These four tracks will completely annihilate you. (VH)
(Deranged, PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2T1, CANADA)

THE HARD FEELINGS – "100 Miles And (sic) Hour/Bo's Bounce"

Nice little slab of the kind of the kind of Estrus-type punk rawk, though a ROY LONEY cover for an A side and a BO DIDDLEY cover on the B, no matter how rocked up, seems kind of like taking the easy route to a single. Come on, boys, write some songs! (DD)

(Tear It Up, PO Box 7616, 5601 JP Eindhoven, NETHERLANDS)

HIBERNATION (XEIMEPIA VAPKN) – "Into the Silence of Eternal Sorrow" CD

Raw crust doom from Greece. Metallic riffs, borrowing just enough from metal to achieve that right amount of crunch, but not straying into the slickness and overproduction that can doom metal (hee hee), combined with eerie swirls of sound and flanger noise over plods and thuds of driving crust rhythms. They have an often eerie, spooky epicness that goes well in this style of crust. At times they remind me of the almighty ANTI-SECT, though mostly of AMEBIX, early NEUROSIS, or BOLT THROWER. Others have said AXE-GRINDER. I hear bits of DYSTOPIA style in their grooves and thuds. All lyrics are in Greek and come with English translations, like their name, XEIMEPIA VAPKN, which is usually listed as HIBERNATION. Nice thick booklet with a great graphic layout. And it's on a label I have enjoyed many a record from. Damn! (WM)

(Power It Up, Postfach 1114, 38156 Vechelde, GERMANY, www.power-it-up.de)

HONOR SYSTEM - "Rise and Run" - CD

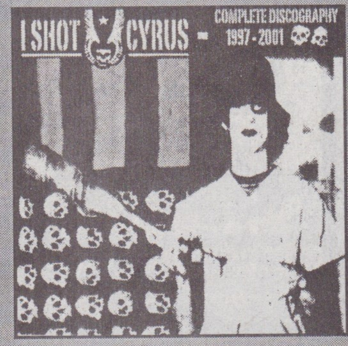
Ten songs of DC emocore/post punk from the windy city of Chicago, a town that seems to crank these types of bands out by the dozen. HONOR SYSTEM is like this: vocals are reminiscent of the guy from NEW TOWN NEUROTICS, and musically they've got a sped up JAWBOX feel, with a pinch of FUGAZI ("Waiting Room"-era). Not bad at all. If you're a fan of this genre, you can't go wrong with HONOR SYSTEM. (AS)

(Grey Flight, PO Box 720595, San Jose, CA, 95172, www.greyflight.com)

THE HORRIBLE ODDS – "Underground" LP

From the handwritten lettering on the cover you know there's a CRIMPSHRINE influence here somewhere, and lo and behold this is a rowdy hybrid of early 90s East Bay and the early 2000s South-by-South East sound that oozes emotion, energy and spirit. Straight outta Chattanooga, Tennessee and featuring a local *Scam* artist on drums the HORRIBLE ODDS continue the legacy of great personal/political punk created by the likes of CHICKENHEAD, CLEVELAND BOUND DEATH SENTENCE, STUN GUNS, OPERATION CLIFF CLAVIN, SHOTWELL, RADON, and of course CRIMPSHRINE. Fans and followers of the old Lookout! and present day No Idea catalogues take note, this is for you. Very good. (AD)

($6 ppd: Onion Flavored, PO Box 190054, San Francisco, CA 94119)



INEPSY – "R 'n' R Babylon" LP

I love MOTORHEAD—one of my all time favorite bands. While BORN DEAD ICONS had elements of the great band, they weren't the punk rock MOTORHEAD I've been waiting 17 years for…but at last my wait is over. This fucking *rules!*! Some of the hardcore Gestapo complains it's too slow, but it wouldn't sound exactly like MOTORHEAD if it were faster. Just in case you're 12 or have been living under a rock and my MOTORHEAD references are lost, this is full on no metal driving punk rock with a vocalist who sounds like he smokes 60 a day. One of my favorite records this year for sure. (TB)

(Feral Ward, www.feralward.com)

INFAMY – "Cracked" EP

These Oslo-motherfuckers crank out six tracks of moderately metallic crust. Heavy down tuned and powerful stomping hardcore that reminds me a bit of the early WOLFPACK stuff, before they developed their melodic tendancies. (MT)

(Sjakk Matt Plater, c/o Tarjei Moksnes, PO Box 7008, N-0306 Oslo, NORWAY)

I SHOT CYRUS - "Complete Discography 1997-2001" CD

I'm glad that I don't know what kind of politics and hype go into making one international hardcore band more popular amongst a U.S. crowd than another. What I am glad to know is that Brazil's I SHOT CYRUS are fucking amazing... Fast! Raw! Harsh! Abrasive! These 21 tracks will crush you like a pile driver, and you'll beg for more... (VH)

(Refuse, PO Box 7, 02-792 Warszawa 78, POLAND, www.refuserecords.prv.pi)

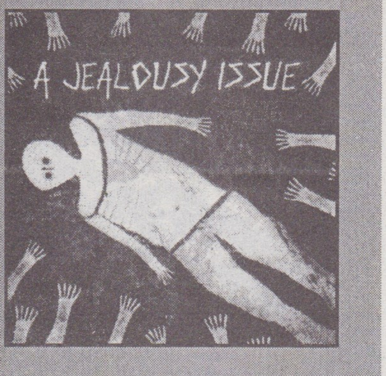
JAILBREAK – "Attitude Adjustment" EP

This is a solid record from start to finish. Not really my thing, but I definitely hear the natural progression from their demo. The production is much better (thanks to recording at Atomic), and the song writing has definitely improved a lot. I really like the vocals on this record compared to the other bands that play this style of hardcore. They aren't as angry or forced sounding as TERROR or NO WARNING, but fans of either of those bands will still really like Michigan's JAILBREAK. My one gripe would be that line at the end of the last song where the singer says "Jailbreak in your motherfucking face." (CC)

(Broken Glass, 1688 Fairway Drive Jamison, PA 18929)

A JEALOUSY ISSUE - "If the Flames Don't Kill Us We Will" CD

I receive the CD, the cover looks like a "world music" compilation, I put my headphones on, press play, and visualize: Suburban rec centers, kids with dyed black hair wearing POISON THE WELL sweatshirts who hate their parents because they bought them the wrong car for their 16th birthday, kickboxing side to side,

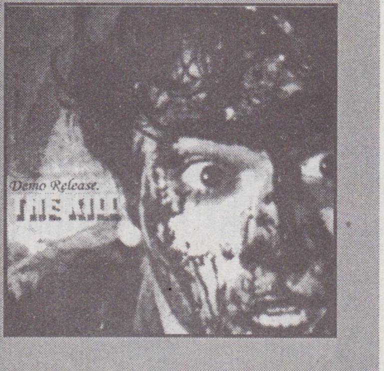


girls holding boyfriends' jackets, the band in front assaulting you with breakdown after breakdown followed by soft guitar parts where the singer whispers and tough floorpunchers begin to hold their heads and cry. Now visualize me throwing the CD straight into the garbage and putting on something that is actually punk. (NT)
(www.indianolarecords.com)

KATYN – "Rise from Ruin" EP

Packed with fuzz and grit, Germany's KATYN play four songs of loud, over-driven, screechy "emo violence" style hardcore. REVERSAL OF MAN could easily be used as a reference point, but a more accurate comparison might be to the French band FINGERPRINT. KATYN have nailed down the same formula of rock-solid riffs colliding with bomb blasts of noise and chaos that lead into sparse, yet powerful breakdowns. Manic. Intense. Great. (VH)
(Crucificados Pelo Sistema, www.crucificados.de)

THE KILL – "Demo Release" EP



Damn! Blazing fast Australian three-piece grindcore, sitting firmly on the HxCx punk side of the fence. The drummer is listed as "Jay Blastasfuk," the guitarist is "Robby Guitorture," and the singer is shown in a picture drenched in blood looking pissed to kill, completely backing up the violent violence with his visual intensity. They're now broken up, and I'd like to imagine that it's due to the total insanity of their style being too much for any life-form, living or undead, to maintain for too long. Wow! Think if über-fast HELLNATION were covering mince-core legends AGATHOCLES and their amps went to 12! Grind fiends rejoice. They've got a MCD on No Escape Records and a split 7" on RSR as well. Check 'em out now! (WM)
(625 Play Fast, Eh? PO Box 423413, San Francisco, CA 94142-3413, www.625thrash.com)

LAZY AMERICAN WORKERS – "Surf Lake Erie" CD

These screwballs tear through fourteen metal-ish hardcore tracks about tattoos, guns, sports and stupid people. There's a spectacular tribute to Dickinson-era MAIDEN, with an original "Nobody Bags on Bruce Dickinson" and a cover of MAIDEN'S "The Trooper." They also rock out an old country classic "The Empty Glass." Pretty silly shit. (HM)
(Sin Klub, www.lazyamericanworkers.com)

LEATHERFACE – "Discography Part 2: Rare and Unreleased" LP & EP

First I'm going to tell you what's on here: two songs from a double EP split with WAT TYLER, two songs from the *Eagle* EP, two songs from the *Beerpig* EP, one track from a "free 7"", a song from the DAMNED tribute LP, unreleased versions of "Shipyards," and "In My Life," an original mix of "Postwar Product of a Fatman's Wallet," and a track from the *Win Some, Lost Some* EP. Some copies of this LP also came with an extra EP with four songs: "I Don't Wanna be the One to Say it," "How Lonely," Spring Time," and "New York State"—although *other* copies *don't* include the EP, so act fast! I am sitting a mere yard or two away from most of the originals, but let's assume, for the sake of argument, that you are not so fortunate. This collection makes a great and seamless record, and I don't know if they remastered it all or what, but it all sounds consistently flawless—gritty and bright like LEATHERFACE should sound. If you're unfamiliar with the band, I would check out the first discography LP. That said, you won't regret this purchase either, if you enjoy, say, the STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, NAKED RAYGUN, PEGBOY, or WAT TYLER. Not like those bands really sound alike, but…just buy the record—you'll see what I mean. (AC)
(Deranged, PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2T1, CANADA)

THE LEN BRIGHT COMBO - "Wreckless Eric Presents…" CD

Now here is a great treat. The two hard to find 1986 LEN BRIGHT COMBO albums *The Len Bright Combo Present The Len Bright Combo By The Len Bright Combo* and *Combo Time!* together on one CD. The Len Bright Combo came about when Wreckless Eric's band the CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY had broken up, but there were some shows that he still needed to play. Eric met Russ Wilkins of THEE MILKSHAKES who offered his services as a bass player whenever Eric needed him. Thee Milkshakes had split up too so Russ brought drummer Bruce Brand along and the Len Bright Combo was formed. The result was a short-lived, fantastic garage band with great lyricism. Even the song titles are fun: "Young, Upwardly Mobile…and Stupid", "Someone Must Have Nailed Us Together", "Shirt Without a Heart", "Ticking In My Corner" to name a few. Two classic albums for any fan of truly great rock and roll. (CK)
(Southern Domestic, www.wrecklesseric.com)

LIFE SET STRUGGLE – "Trapped" EP

The music and layout of this record remind me of LIFES HALT. I am sure that they're tired of hearing that comparison, but that is seriously the first thing that came to my mind when looking at the cover and then putting the record on for the first time. Now I am starting to notice a little BLACK FLAG in the mix. I am also noticing a reoccurring theme in Sikander's lyrics. Songs like "Still Fucked" and "Trapped" create a bleak and suffocating outlook on life in Michigan. For LIFE SET STRUGGLE, skating seems to be their remedy to this life. The only problem is, it snows five months out of the year (addressed in the song "Stuck Inside"). Hell, it beats hitting the bars in Ann Arbor! Once again another great punk/hardcore release from the one-man-machine known as Max Ward. Oh, and if I can put in my two cents, I've spent some time in Michigan, and let me tell you, it isn't half as bad as living in Ohio. Remember that. (CC)
(625, PO Box 423413, San Francisco, CA 94142-3413, www.625thrash.com)

LIPSTICK PICKUPS – 12"

If the girls lounging on their beds on the covers of the *Rodney on the Roq* comps got together and started a band, this is probably what they would sound like. (They could also recruit the girls John Travolta hangs out with in *Saturday Night Fever*—including Fran Drescher. Maybe they'd let in Cyndi Lauper do back-ups if she lost the sad clown act.) The ultra-snotty-cute girl vocals in these eight songs are all, like, leave me alone, ya creep. Or like, whaddya say we go get a soda? I'm making this up, but I'm not, really. I can't understand most of the lyrics, and sadly, there are no liner notes or photos or anything, just an exceptional logo shaped like a high-heeled shoe. I like this—it's not too cutesy, and the songs are crafty, catchy, and punk. There's a cover, too…a song I like…but I can't quite place it... (AC)
(Radio Beat)

LONESOME KINGS - "Shotgun Full of Blues" CD

Here's some punk rock with a heavy country twang. This dark rockabilly has plenty of thumpin' bass to keep your toes tapping. Deep vocals shout about serial killers, death, and loneliness. Excellent for those of you punkers who enjoy a little ye-haw now and then. (SR)
(Emerald City Sounds, PO Box 14709, Richmond VA 23221; www.emeraldcitysounds.com)

LOVE ME DESTROYER - "Black Heart Affair" CD

Anguished, melodic, emo, of the HOT WATER MUSIC with two metallic guitars type. Lots of chops and changes, but they keep the driving rock at a pretty high level. Me likes. Artwork shows (simulates) folks being killed in a variety of manners. Not sure what the point of that is, but there you go...(RK)
(Suburban Home, www.suburbanhomerecords.com)

LYCANTHROPHY / NESOUCÁST STROJE – split EP

Furious Czech grind assault with both bands' intensity levels set at ultra-high. LYCANTHROPHY are a bottom heavy "wall of pulverize" but are nowhere near slow in speed as that description might imply—the drummer is an infernal machine of rapidly crushing death, fer Chris' sake. They thank such luminaries as ROT, DENAK, and ULCERRHOEA—and that puts them in the right company/frame of mind. NESOUCÁST STROJE, on the flipside, are a heavy stomp and plod power-violence trio with the speed and controlled recklessness of Japanese fast-core mixed with the nastiness of HxCx-grind. JELLYROLL ROCKHEADS covering SPAZZ after listening to nothing but CRIPPLE BASTARDS for twelve days straight while in the desert. The in-between samples of bees buzzing sound to me like maggot-laying flies of doom. Seventeen (!) different labels helped to put this out. (WM)
(Insane Society, 501 01 Hradec Králové 2, CZECH REPUBLIC, www.insanesociety.net)

MAXEEN – CD

Punky pop with an 80s bent (as in New Wave). People will probably label these guys as another emo pop band, but I hear the 80s influence of early POLICE and MIDNIGHT OIL, with their choppy guitar and quirky rhythms at times. I really dig this. (RL)
(Side One Dummy, PO Box 2350, Los Angeles, CA 90078, www.sideonedummy.com)

McGILLICUDDYS - "Kilt by Death" CD

Another Canadian band harkening back to their Scottish roots. Unlike the pop and pogo punk of the REAL MCKENZIES, these guys and gals go for the amped up electric folk sounds of the POGUES, complete with mandolin and prominent accordion. And they're pretty good at it too. A brace of "traditional" tunes, and lots of originals. Songs about drinking, fair lassies, and regret. (RK)
(Retch, 49 Rose Crescent, Woodvale, Southport, Merseyside, PR8, UNITED KINGDOM)

M.A.S.S. – "Live a Little" EP

Interesting juxaposition here. It sounds like one of those new post-wave bands being fronted by a sultry soul singer. The music bips and bops around and the female singer belts out the vocals, even harmonizing to an extent a male vocalist. Suprisingly, it works. (CK)
(Lonestar)

MEZZANINE – "C14" CD

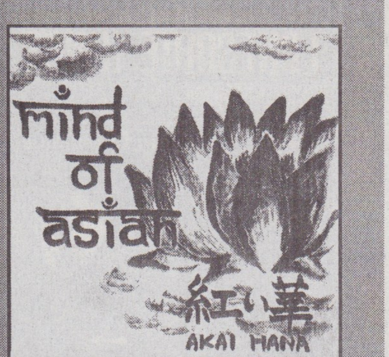
Rough tunes comprised of repetitive rhythms, surging riffs and harsh howling vocals. HOOVER meets the JESUS LIZARD? That would be my summary. (RC)
(Break Even, PO Box 42469, Philadelphia, PA 19101)

MIGRA VIOLENTA – "Superficial" 10"

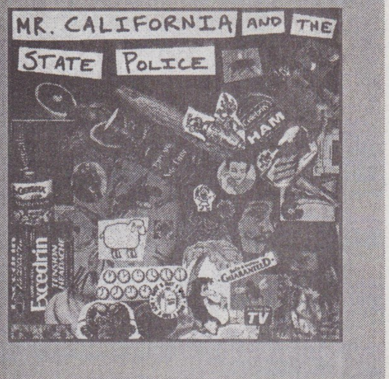
Like many Latin American bands, MIGRA VIOLENTA, from Buenos Aires, plays with palpable fury and real shit to say—about poverty, the borders, and of course, the scene. Their technical, intensely heavy sound hammers those messages home. With a mile-a-minute, hard-hitting drummer, they usually do it pretty fast. But I think their more mid-tempo songs, like "El Futuro Esta Lejos," are superior, and really moving. This is a winner. (AC)
(Les Mains Aussi c/o Nicolas Retiere, 1 rue Edgar Quinet, 38000 Grenoble, FRANCE, migraviolenta@hotmail.com)

MIND OF ASIAN – "Akai Hana" EP

Six tracks of HC thrash on red wax from these four Tokyo gals. Yasu's vocals delivered rapid fire



in Japanese and English are pretty fierce, but sound a bit strange, almost sounding like they were sped up in mastering. Pretty ripping guitar leads and lots of changes, but it just does not grab me by the throat, though "Life," with its acoustic picking, very nearly did. The last two tracks, "Life" and "One Own Way" are, to me, the EP's highlights. (RR)
(no address)



MR. CALIFORNIA & THE STATE POLICE – EP

More frantic magic from MR. CALIFORNIA. One-man-band hardcore. This is no departure from his previous efforts, and for that I am glad. Listen quickly—the 12 cuts will leave you dazed and slightly annoyed that it's not a 25-track 12" dance single. Patience, there's always next week (with this guy). (RW)
(Armpit Toast, 211 Coventry Crescent, Frederction, NB E3B 4P4 CANADA)

MR. CALIFORNIA & THE GREEN BUDDIES / THE WEIRD TURNED PRO – "Violent Corpse/Trash Heap Drumset Rock"

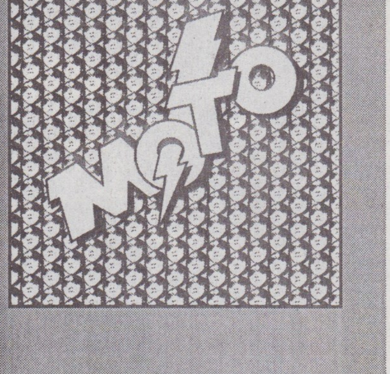
Here's this issue's pick for fans of fucked-up, art-damaged, whatever-they're-calling-it-this-week. "Trash Heap Drumset Rock," the more "commercial" side, is a stirring hymn to shitty drums performed in a marginally competent way that will amuse your friends for years to come. MR. CALIFORNIA weaves together non-musical and more or less musical snippets into the aural enchantment for which he's justly famed. I don't know if anyone's going to be paying big money for any records in 20 years, but I'll say this much: if this single was 20+ years old, people would be paying big money for it now. (DD)
(Trash Heap, no address)

MODERN DAY URBAN BARBARIANS – "The Endless Retreat" CD

You dopes, you started the CD off with the worst track. Weak, tuneless and vague. *Then*, it picks up from there, but not by an enormous amount. There is a randomness to the songs that does not give you that "accident" excitement; it just feels like a creative compromise was struck. If these guys are fans of FLIPPER, and I'm betting that they are, they need to examine their opus a little more closely and identify that at the heart of every drugged-out jam is a nice little Falconi guitar riff. It prevents tedium, and allows for the sludge you hold dear. Try it! (RW)
(South 6 Productions, www.mdub.com)

MONDAY IN LONDON – "The Red Machine" CD

Whoa…I mean…wow, this is pretty foul. I guess this could maybe fall under the label "punk," 'cause musically they show elements of bands like FUGAZI or AT THE DRIVE-IN, though watered down quite a bit. Basically dark sounding "emo" pop with lots of minor chords and plenty of dynamics and occasional hardcore elements. The vocals are straight-up RADIOHEAD or SHUDDER TO THINK most of the time, though there are some screamy parts, for sure. Sometimes they remind me of a hardcore punk SMITHS, though not in a good way. Lyrics are self-absorbed, the kind that just make me want to give up. I don't know, guys, you're cute and all, but… (WR)
(Indianola, www.indianolarecords.com)



MOTO – "Spiral Slouch" EP

….Chicago up-tempo pop band…..not bad actually…..it's rocking me!!!! This is what the FOO FIGHTERS should sound like!!!!!! See, white guys in college can STILL get laid!!!! Even if it is with each-other…!!! And speaking of school and sex, if I had to grade this project I would have to give it a "C+" which is about the equivalence of a 6 1/2 inch cock with a thin layer of glaze on the helmet!!!!!!! (SW)
(Shit Sandwich, 3107 North Rockwell, Chicago, IL 60618, www.shitsandwichrecords.com)

MOTORHOME – "Commando" EP

"I just want to be alone" is the battle cry that starts the title tack. I don't think that'll be a problem. I want nothing to do with MOTORHOME, a band that specializes in musical vandalism, which has now come to be known as "high-octane, AC/DC-inspired rawk." To their credit, they do it as well as anyone else out there. (MC)
(Infringement, PO Box 1224, Eugene, OR 97440)

MOTTEK – "Hypnose" LP

This remix of MOTTEK's memorable album from about 1984 is not only on cool marbled vinyl (unlike the original), but now has tuneage that seems noticeably cleaner. What really makes this LP work is not so much great songwriting (though it's quite competent) as its barrelling energy and incisive rhythm guitars. It makes for compulsive listening from one track to another. If you don't have it, now's your chance. (SS)
(Re-Force, Wolechol 4, 30500 Wedemark, GERMANY)

MUSTAPHAMOND – "Flammable Dreams" EP

Both of these two songs start off way too heavy on the bullshit indie-prog rock guitar noodling. It's awful, fucking awful, and makes me want to write off MUSTAPHAMOND as complete shit. *but*, I keep listening… after twenty minutes of idle masturbation they blow their load and shift gears into some powerful, melodic, mid 90s Ebullition-style screamo. The songs are actually pretty good. And the hand-screened packaging is beautiful. But honestly, I've completely lost interest by this point, and I know I wouldn't lose any sleep coming up with a list of fifty other bands that have done exactly the same thing better. (VH)
(Grey Sky, 1631 NE Broadway, PMB 109, Portland, OR 97232)

NEUTROTIC SWINGERS – "Art Rats" LP

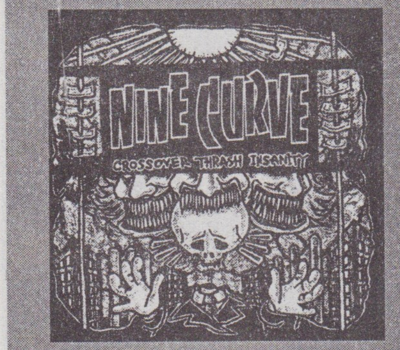
So the month before last The Powers That Be "accidentally" lost my reviews (I'm on to you sneaky SOBs!) and out of all the crap I reviewed, this was the only thing that mattered enough for me to absolutely, positively mention. It needs to be reviewed. You, the rock and roll aficionado, need to know about this goddamn record. It's fucking great, is what it is. I haven't been able to turn this off. Any day of the week, you can peek into my window and see me jumping up and down on the couch and spazzing around the living room while this blasts out through my stereo. It's that goddamn good. These Frenchies seriously know the what's what. Imagine, if you will, the BRIEFS and HIVES hanging out drinking beer, eating pizza, and flipping through old issues of *Sniffin' Glue* and *Creem* magazine, then suddenly they decided to make a record as a super group. That super group would sound like these guys, only not as good. So, why don't you put that in your pipe and smoke it, Mr. Man? Just get this fucking record so I can shut up already. (BM)
(Demolition Derby, PB 4005, 2800 Mechelen 4, Belgium, GERMANY, www.chez.com/neuroticswingers, neuroticswingers@wanadoo.fr)

NINE CURVE – "Crossover Thrash Insanity" EP

Crossover thrash insanity you say? Well, I suppose that is a somewhat accurate description. NINE CURVE, who are from Japan, tears through four songs of fast thrash with some strong hints of metal. But I certainly wouldn't call this crossover. It was good, but a tad simplistic. But hey, kudos to Max for keeping the releases coming! I don't know how he does it. (RC)
(625, PO Box 423413, San Francisco, CA 94142-3413, www.625thrash.com)

NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS – "Storkøbenhavn" LP

Christ, if this hasn't been the soundtrack around the *MRR* house winter I don't know what is—not a day goes by where this doesn't get blasted a full volume—and with good reason. Those København punx have done it again—yet another amazing record that sounds like some long lost classic punk record, something so familiar that you swear you've heard it before. It brings back some immediate connection in your mind to a youth spent drinking in alleys, smoking cigarettes in the rain and running from cops after stealing tubes of glue meant for an afternoon of huffing. And Skating, always skating. "I stuffed myself with pills today, doesn't seem to be working… It's a rainy day, My life just slips through my hands, just to fade away." Thirteen tracks of edgey, anthemic, riff heavy punk that pulls heavily from the blueprint mapped out by early TSOL and AGENT ORANGE. It's dark and moody while still retaining some sense of melody and an emphasis on writing top quality songs. Anthems, if you will, for a doomed youth. Absolutely essential. (MT)
(Kick n Punch, PO Box 578, 220 Copenhagen N, DENMARK, www.kicknpunch.com)



NO REST – "Suportar A Dor" CD

Hailing from Porte Alegre, Brazil—NO REST crank out thirteen tracks of ripping female fronted hardcore. Raw yet with a slight melodic tinge—much like *Ingoberables*-era SIN DIOS mixed with the later HARUM SCARUM stuff. I'm really into Aline's throaty, angsty vocal delivery, it does well to compliment the speedy, riff heavy punk attack. Great stuff. (MT)
(Caixa Postal 8593, Agência Tristeza, Porto Alegre/RS, CEP 91901-970, BRAZIL, www.norest.com.br)

PARK - "It Won't Snow Where You're Going" CD

A polished attempt at pop-emo. Y'know, GET UP KIDS, SAVES THE DAY, ALKALINE TRIO, ought to be on Vagrant type stuff. Just, er, not as good. (RK)
(Lobster Music, www.lobsterrecords.com)

P.A.W.N.S. – "Rabble on the Move" CD

Third release by these guys. And it may be the best thing I have heard all year. Unique vocal patterning, high-toned guitar mixing it up with snarey drums and cruising bass lines. Political as fuck. If you like SUBMISSION HOLD, NO MEANS NO or LA FRACTION you will soon be dancing and smashing to these fucks. Incredible. (JA)
(Spam, PO Box 21588, El Sobrante, CA. 95820-1588)

PEEPSHOWS – CD

Um, it's rock 'n' roll in the same way that BOB SEGER & THE SILVER BULLET BAND and/or GRAND FUNK RAILROAD were rock 'n' roll. Y'know, that sorta front-row hootchie-coo is going through something of a renaissance with the likes of the MOONEY SUZUKI and MIGHTNIGHT THUNDER EXPRESS. Covers of the FLAMIN' GROOVIES "Shake Some Action" and RADIO BIRDMAN's "Murder City Nights" belie their intentions to graft hair rock into modern day stadium punk. Hell, they're good at what they do, but the line between the PEEPSHOWS and BLACK CROWES is gossamer-thin. OK, the endless guitar solos just killed 'em for me. Pass. (JH)
(Green Hell, von Steuben Str. 17, 48143 Münster, GERMANY, stereodrive@greenhell.de)

PHANTOM LIMBS – "Hot Knives & Hornets" EP

OK, for the late-arriving but eager-to-participate, here are two cuts from the first s/t LIMBS 7" from 2000, their track from a split with the FLESHIES, and a brand new recording, a cover of the SCREAMERS' "122 Hours of Fear." It's all excellent doomy synth punk, and if you have yet to sample them, this is the perfect place to start. (RW)
(Transsolar, www.transsolarrecords.de)

PHYSICAL CHALLENGE - "Some Still Care" CD

PHYSICAL CHALLENGE play heavy, angst-filled hardcore... Punishing us with this five track assault of thick chugga chugga guitars that lead into melodic riffs and breakdown at all the right times. The song writing is executed with precision, and that's the problem. It's tough, macho garbage. (VH)
(Rival)

PIPEDOWN – "Mental Weaponry" CD

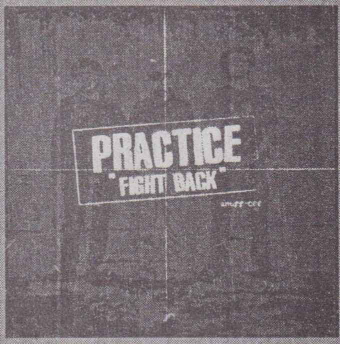
This album is a good representation of PIPEDOWN, as I have seen them live. Musically, very, very much like *Shut Your Mouth...* or *Black Sails*--era AFI, though they throw in some guitar leads that make me think that they have been listening to AT THE DRIVE-IN, and some vocal parts that scream CONVERGE. Basically, it's dark, melodic punk, with good production that sounds a little too much like the music that makes me want to hurl every time I turn on the radio. Lyrically, they address ideas outside of the normal scope of punk rock, referencing Thoreau, Buddha, and Nietzsche, among others. However, coupled with music that sounds bland and done to me, there's nothing grabbing me and making me pay attention to the lyrics. The band and recording is plenty solid, it's just lacking any spark. Yet another disappointing A-F records release. (WR)
(A-F, PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, www.a-frecords.com)

PLOUGHOUND - "Focus on the Candy" CD

10 tracks of muscular pop-punk, somewhat reminiscent of BIG DRILL CAR. At their best, they add a dash of 70s bubblegum. Unfortunately, those moments are few and far between, and there's not much else happening to keep it interesting. Well played and produced for sure, just a tad lacking in the catchy tunes dept. (RK)
(Snowball, www.snowballrecords.com)

PRACTICE – "Fight Back" EP

It's been a while since I had a dose of Japanese SNUFF-influenced pop punk. This takes me right back to the days of Snuffy Smile's earliest releases. These three songs wipe the floor with any of the wimpy airbrushed rubbish purporting to be pop punk on MTV right now. The prerequisite SNUFF guitar hooks and woah-woah backups are in place, but there's something about the bass lines that make me think of early GREEN DAY, or maybe even The 'TONE. Rockin'. (AM)
(Snuffy Smile, 4-1-16-201 Daita Setagaya-Ku, Tokyo 155-0033, JAPAN)

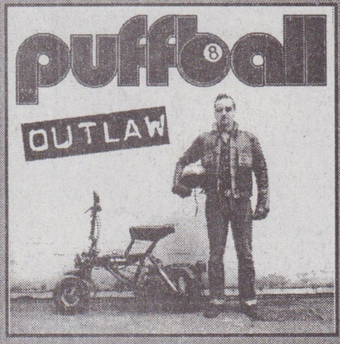


THE PROWL – "Misery" 10"

The PROWL is immediately reminiscent of many of the classic 80s bands we all love so much. Considering it's on DeadAlive, you might be able to guess that it's a sonic great-grandchild to the NECROS or BLACK FLAG. Mix tunes bursting with aggression with yelling at inner demons and you get *Misery*. Not really my thing, but I think it'll please the rock-with-hardcore folks. (MC)
(DeadAlive, PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101)

PSYCHOPUNCH – "Long Way Down/Moonlight City"

PSYCHOPUNCH continues to kick serious ass with heavy rock tunes. Long Way Down is a sonic, blazing rocker along the lines of GLUCIFER or early SUPERSUCKERS. Moonlight City is a slower bluesy jam. Dumb cover art and kick ass tunes. (HM)
(Stereodrive!, Von-Steuben-str. 17, 48143 Muenster GERMANY, www.psychopunch.com)



PUFFBALL – "Outlaw" EP

These Swedish rockers have been around for some years now. PUFFBALL plays some journeyman rock 'n' roll on the a-side of this Stereodrive! Records release. It is quite competent, with a slight NOMADS feel to it. On the b-side, PUFFBALL cranks it up with "Hornet Rider," which will appeal to some HELLA-COPTERS fans. "Mamatried," the final cut, was written by country music great MERLE HAGGARD and while it is probably a respectful attempt, doesn't do the original justice. (BR)
(Stereodrive, Von Steuben Str. 17, 48143 Muenster, GERMANY, stereodrive@greenhell.de, www.greenhell.de)

THE PULSES – "Little Brothers" 10"

The PULSES have a bit of a split personality. Their music is a mix of out-and-out XTC-style pop made interesting with artier, quirkier guitar sounds and rhythms. In this they have a lot in common with the UK's FUTUREHEADS. At first I admit I was put off by the polished, radio-ready sound, but the songs are growing on me as I speak. Eight tunes here and every one's a winner, honest. (AM)
(Dirtnap, PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

THE PURRS – CD

Stripped-down punky pop with gal vocals. Good songs along the ways of the EYELINERS and JOAN JETT, with their basic mid-tempo retro feel. Simple but tuneful stuff from these three gals and a guy drummer. (RL)
(Garage Pop, PO Box 88003, Rochester, NY 14618, www.garagepoprecords.com)

PUT-ONS – "Get Your Kicks/Sleeping With the Devil"

Earnest hearthrobby rock *et* roll sounds. The PUT-ONS prop modern p. rock with 80s-style power

pop flavorings. They're neither twisted enough to stand out from the pack nor to wind my brain into a frenzy. A little too familiar for jaded ears such as mine. (JH)
(Puke 'n' Vomit, PO Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 92834)

QUEERWÜLF – EP

Well now, QUEERWÜLF is what we here at *MRR* call good ole East Bay style punk rock. It's melodic, dirty, raw sounding, and generally sort of makes you feel good. Only thing is; QUEERWÜLF is from Chattanooga. Whatever like any of that matters, this record is great. Sounds like: GRIMPLE, CRIMPSHRINE, MIAMI, and/or SHOTWELL rolled into one. (AS)
(This Here!, PO Box 481, Chattanooga, TN, 37401)

THE QUICK – " In Tune" EP

Storming straight outta the BAY CITY ROLLERS' wardrobe and certainly not with a fast mileage of difference in music style, comes a band I shamefully know the square root of fuck-all about. This comes off as one of those many power pop combos that drenched the period from '78 to '81, taking in all the best aspects of a much-ignored genre, like the sugary bubblegum pop mixed with the jagged brashness of punk rock. If you can showband [? -ed] with the best of us to the dancehall friendly sounds of THE OUTCASTS, FASTCARS, and probably their closest music equivalents THE STARJETS, then this is just the ticket for you. (SD)
(Bacchus, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507, www.dionysusrecords.com)

RADIO BEATS / GIVE-UPS – split EP

As is far too often the case, this split 7" is an example of one band making a great showing (RADIO BEATS) and the other vacationing in dullsville (the GIVE-UPS). As you might've been able to gather, I prefer The RADIO BEATS' lo-fi DEVIL DOGS-inspired rave-ups (lotta hyphens there) to the blah bad-boy punk of The GIVE-UPS. (MC)
(613 Sixth St., Glen Dale, WV 26038)

RAMONES – "More Unreleased Tracks" LP

More entertaining than the unreleased RAMONES comp of a few months ago, by virtue of including "Happy Birthday Mr. Burns," with the immortal "Have the ROLLING STONES killed" line and a fairly embarrassing medley of Oscar-nominated songs. Includes versions of "Sonic Reducer" and "1969" that I suppose were done for their cover album, and like the other comp, way too much Marky-era-sounding stuff, but I guess there are plenty of collectors who will be very happy to buy this. (DD)
(Sire, 165 W. 74th St., New York, NY 10023)

RATWASTER – "Generation Pouet-Pouet" EP

These angry French politicos include both French and English lyrics to accompany their impassioned punk. They're somewhere between the SUBHUMANS and CITIZEN FISH with Quentin rippin' out some tasty trumpet and saxophone licks. Good shit. (HM)
(Sick of Talk, PO Box 9723, Reno NV 89507, www.sickoftalk.com)

REMAINS OF THE DAY – "Hanging on Rebellion" LP

Second long-player by these gloomy Portland natives. Terse, sweeping hardcore, the soundtrack to Armageddon. It would be unfair to label these with the Portland/Nashville brush but its impossible not to see the FROM ASHES RISE/HIS HERO IS GONE comparisons. Maybe a little more chaotic, but still huge, driving and epic like those peddlers of doom and gloom. A worthy addition to the Portland legacy. (TB)
(Yellow Dog, PO Box 550208, D-10372, Berlin, GERMANY)

RETALIATOR – "The Sweeny" EP

Are Oi bands really this dumb? Well, guessing by the prepubescent attempts at lyrics, mixed in with the repetitive chug, chug, chug of the power chords-only school of rock, not to mention the obligatory call for more flag-waving, I can safely say, Christ, there even fuckin' dumber. (SD)
(Camden Town, PO Box 121, 17004 Girona, SPAIN, Camdentown@iespana.es)

ROCK THE LIGHT - "Let's Do Something We'll Both Regret" CD

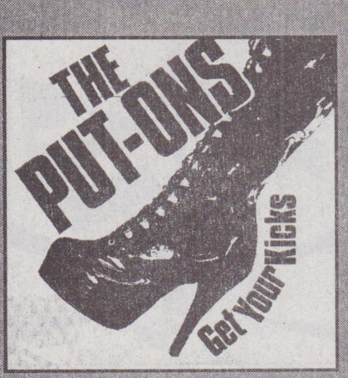
Not *Rock for Light* unfortunately. This is fairly standard garage/trashy rock n roll fare. More HIVES than HUMPERS. Nothing to write home about. (RK)
(no address)

SAMHAIN – "Unholy Passion" LP

Post-MISFITS, pre-DANZIG band from our favorite bedevil-locked Smurf. I'm assuming this is a boot by the shitty cover and muddy sound. I dismissed this back in the day 'cos it was too slow and even had keyboards (yuck). Its aged well however, and I'm totally into it: much more gothic creep and crawl than the MISFITS and no metal like his later incarnation. If Elvis was a dwarf and was into gothic music it would sound like this. Awesome slow version of the MISFITS classic "All Hell Breaks Loose" too. (TB)
(no address)

SAMHAIN – " Initium" LP

Ah, perfect timing—fitting in nicely to the Glen Danzig revival currently at its peak in our house-



hold. If you think that it all ended with the demise of the MISFITS, then my friend, you are missing out on a Goth-punk gem. Darker than a coal miner's boot, with more blood and gore than your average Glasgow Rangers/Celtic derby, and enough punk rock to keep the safety-pinned brigade interested, this has gotta be a must. Once you get over the misconception that everything took a nosedive after the MISFITS, I suggest you run to the store and help yourself to three SAMHAIN LPs, and if you're feeling slightly daring, why not grab both DANZIG long plays while your at it? Bootleg of the year, if there is such a thing. (SD)
(no address)

SEXY – "Por Vida" LP

What's wrong with being SEXY, man??? Not a damn thing. The SEXY rock the East Bay style punker steez well. Noisy, raw, melodic, and generally fucking great. How could you not like this record? It's got funny lyrics and goddamn catchy hooks. This record is guaranteed to charm the pants off of most difficult punk music critics. J CHURCH meets the BANANAS meets CRIMPSHRINE meets BILLY CHILDISH. Get This!!!! (AS)
($6 ppd: Onion Flavored, PO Box 190054, San Francisco, CA 94119)

SHAM 69 – " If the Kids are United/The Best of..." LP

……ah, the SHAM……the seed that sprouted "Oi"….and the best of the lot too!!!!! It's hard not to have a soft spot for a band like this….!!!! Old punks and skins both agree that the politics of SMAM 69 are like a pearl from Pursey's working class semen…..!!!!! These motherfuckers wrote some of the best sing-alongs EVER!!!! Is it true that old Jimmy is a MALE MODEL now????????? Or is he just another gigolo with a unibrow….??? Regardless, this collection is good….but where the fuck is "Unite and Win"?????? (SW)
(Get Back, Via Aretina, 25 – 50069 Sieci, Firenze ITALY)

SHARK PANTS – "Porno Snakehead" CD

Tucson punk is always weird, and a bit mysterious. Garage-y stuff here. Trashed out 70s rock. I like it, reminds me of FLESHIES. Some of the lyrics are vaguely sexist, but with a band like this, it's probably just silliness (JA)
(Recess, PO Box 1666, San Pedro, CA. 90733)

S.H.A.T. – "Stupid Has A Target" EP

Nine blasts of snotty funny punk rock from these four Bay Area chaps that immediately brings to mind early FYP. Primitive and raw with a totally irreverent sense of humor. My personal favorite being the song that goes "Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god I'm gonna puke." Those are all the lyrics. (MT)
(Spam, PO Box 21538, El Sobrante, CA 94820, www.spamrecords.org)

THE SHOWOFFS – "Shocker" EP

These guys rock! They sound just like the BODIES with bouncing bass lines, pressing beats and infectious choruses. The production is live and loose with lyrics about psychos (being one or dealing with them). There's a meager 300 copies, so hurry up and order one of the few naked titty covers or you'll have to settle for a bland guitar cover. (HM)
(NoMa Beach, PO Box 735, Sonoma CA 95476, www.nomabeach.com)

THE SIDEKICKS / SHORT ROUND – split CD

SHORT ROUND delivers three tracks of super melodic pop punk. Musically, they sound very similar to recent Chicago bands like ALKALINE TRIO, TUESDAY, or the HONOR SYSTEM. Lyrically, they address personal issues. The SIDEKICKS offer two new tracks that I think are their best yet. As before, they do very melodic pop punk that sounds similar to THE GET UP KIDS, but their new songs remind me at times of STRIKE ANYWHERE or a very sugary FIFTEEN or D.B.S., especially because lyrically they are addressing more political issues. They also contribute a SHORT ROUND cover, and a very smokin' cover of a later DINOSAUR JR. song, complete with the solos, which make me wonder if they dragged J Mascis' depressed ass out to the studio to lay down some tracks. (WR)
(Let's Go, PO Box 156, Campbell, CA 95008, www.letsgorecords.com)

SISTER MARY ROTTEN CROTCH - "Fuckload o' Pretty" LP

Hell yes! Liz, Allison, Amy, and Brent are bringing you more hard-edged street punk from Kansas City, Missouri! You get 13 originals with the patented tough-girl melodic punk SISTER MARY ROTTEN CROTCH sound, and one cover song. Liz and her bandmates offer up some poignant lyrics about human behaviour in this modern world. In "Little Slut," SISTER MARY ROTTEN CROTCH criticizes a girl who gets pregnant and tries to reap a profit: "You're a stupid little whore/Always looking to score/Trying to play your games/You give girls a bad name/Now you want the big bucks/ Not your usual cheap fucks…" SISTER MARY ROTTEN CROTCH delivers intelligent lyrics backed by strong rock 'n' roll! (BR)
(Moo Cow, 38 Larch Circle, Belmont, MA 02478)

SIXFINGER - "East Side All-Stars Play Hard" CD

Typical pop-punk fare. Actually, this disc mainly stands out due to it not being as super-polished/MTV worthy as most of this genre seems to be these days. Definitely more J CHURCH than BLINK 182, though unfortunately, the words are all about the "I'm staring out my window thinking of you" blah. (RK)
(Rapscillion, PMB 227, 589 Hartford Road, New Britain, CT 06053)

THE SKULLS – "Gold and Ruby Red/Seven and Seven Is"

Hmm. The first cut is a slower, deliberate number that, I think, is supposed to have a "mood." The flip side is pretty similar in this regard, though it's got the added pleasure of a little "herky-jerky-let's-change-the-tempo-just-for-the-hell-of-it" thing going on. This is not my favorite sort of thing, but it is well played. Limited to 1000 copies. (KK)

(Headline, 7706 Melrose Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90046)

SKULLS / TEXAS THIEVES – split EP

Why do I have the feeling I'm in for a whole lot of suck? All right, let's listen to the TEXAS THIEVES first, since they are apparently SF locals… Not bad, very snotty, and somewhat catchy. Kinda reminds me of GUTTERMOUTH at times, but it's more '77 and less skate punk. Oh, wow, the SKULLS are actually the good SKULLS, not that crappy band who plasters stickers all over the Subway where my girlfriend used to work. That's a relief. This is anthemy with out being overly Roehrs-ish, therefore I'm liking it. The old timers wonder "Can Punk Rock Pay the Bills"? Hmmm, good question. Let's go ask Mike Thorn. "Hey, Mike, are you handing out paychecks at tonight's year-end staff meeting?" "No." Well, there you have it, folks. So I guess this is actually a pretty good record. And, I guess it goes without saying I won't be attending tonight's meeting either… (BM)

(Dr. Strange, PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701, www.drstrange.com)

SMALLTOWN – "Years, months/When the Oil Runs Out"

I'm so happy that this band has got a (somewhat) domestic label releasing their material. Hailing from Sweden, SMALLTOWN have been my flavor of the month since I reviewed their first record a few years back. Congratulations to Deranged for being the first North American label to acknowledge the greatness of this young three piece. Playing the perfect blend of STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, the CLASH and the JAM mixed with a little modern suss and Scandinavian magic, SMALLTOWN write songs with power, emotion and more hooks than an angler's tackle box. The A-side is a new song and preludes a full length to come (which I am literally crapping myself in anticipation of) and the b-side is a flawless NEWTOWN NEUROTICS cover which puts them on the same hallowed ground as The BELTONES, and The STRIKE. The only drawback is that there's only two tracks here, but never mind, get this record, get the album when it comes out, and write the band imploring them to come play in your town. The best thing around right now… (AD)

(Deranged, PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2T1, CANADA)

SOUTHPAW – "Trajectories" CD

A band with a SNUFF connection I believe (former member?) These UK folks do the emo pop punk rock thing. Guitars like LEATHERFACE and SNUFF, with vocals like Guy of FUGAZI. Reminds me of the band ADHESIVE from a few years back who I really liked. Good stuff from these semi-vets. (RL)

(Boss Tuneage, southpawrocks@hotmail.com)

STAB CITY SLIT WRISTS – "Forget Hollywood" CD

Snotty emo tinged rock 'n' roll with screamy male and female vocals with some spoken parts. Reminds me vaguely of the BLOOD BROTHERS. Eight songs seems a bit much in one sitting, probably would have made a better EP. This thing is heavy on attitude and revolutionary rhetoric as well as poetic imagery. If they came to the Bay area they could play with the PHANTOM LIMBS. Giving me a headache. (RR)

(Tapes Records, 638 77th Avenue Olympia, WA 98506)

THE STAKEOUT – "On the Run" LP

This record fucking smokes a pack of Camels. Does anyone remember that movie with Emilio Estevez called *Stakeout*? Well this is about 100 times better than that movie. If this were an Emilio Estevez movie, it would be *Young Guns*. Matter of fact, it would be that scene in *Young Guns* when Billy the Kid pops out of the trunk after being thrown out the window and takes out half the U.S. Calvary. Remember how rad that was when you first saw it? Well that is how this record is making me feel. Fast Finnish hardcore that takes it's influences from the early 80s American hardcore sound. Seventeen songs on 45 RPM! (CC)

(Deranged, PO Box 543, Stn. P Toronto Ontario, M5S-2T1, CANADA)

STRENGTH APPROACH – "The Fall Through My Eyes" CDEP

Hard-hittin' hardcore from Italy. Fours tracks of brutal in-yer-face speed and power followed by a melodic yet no-less-powerful title track that for me makes this one a winner. Nice layout and disc design make this all-the-more cooler. Tough! (AD)

(whereitliesrcs@hotmail.com)

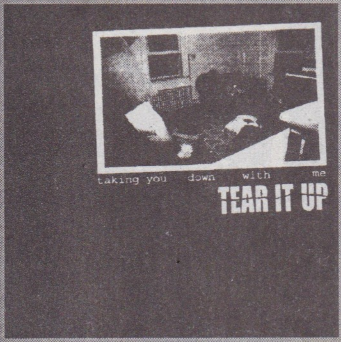
SUPPRESSION – "9296" CD

Way back when, well before the current war on Iraq but just after the first war on Iraq, when Power-Violence© was mostly a West Coast phenomenon, there was SUPPRESSION, the East Coast's answer to the West Coast domination of slow-fast-thrash-brutal-and-intense hardcore with bands like CROSSED OUT and MAN IS THE BASTARD. Noisy and chaotic, fast and slow, at their best (*The Cage* EP and their split with DESPISE YOU) they built CROSSED OUT-styled grooves and then thrashed the fuck out of them with noise and screaming howls, guitar, and feedback-drenched distortion, fast, bash, crash. I, myself, still listen to this band often and am glad that this discography CD exists—to save my vinyl grooves, collecting their '92 rehearsal/demo, the first 7", two split 7"s, a couple of comp tracks, some live, and the split LP with CRIPPLE

BASTARDS. Relive the old days of anger over an unjust Iraq war once again with a soundtrack for the eventual collapse of society. (WM)
(RSR, c/o Sandro Gessner, Str. Des Friedens 45, 07819 Mittelpöllnitz, GERMANY, skrupel@web.de)

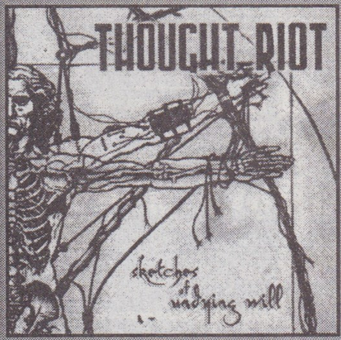
TALK HARD – "Sarah Connor's Will" EP

TALK HARD indeed. This band's lyrics fit their namesake perfectly. Not since CHARLES BRONSON have I read lyrics so intelligent and so specific in their criticisms of hardcore and straight edge. While I have to agree with half of what is written, I still have to wonder why there is so much focused hatred on the bad. It's like a thirteen-song diatribe about how the singer wants to kill all the record collector nerds, scene sluts, and indie rockers with a knife. Funny? Sometimes. Productive? Not really. I have a feeling that more than one person did this kid wrong, because if I was this jaded and bummed out about everything and everybody, I would of dropped out a long time ago. As cheesy as this may sound, focusing on the positive things and people in hardcore and punk rock has kept me coming back year after year. I almost forgot to mention that I still really like this record. Musically, this is top-notch fast hardcore with some seriously good breakdowns. I am not kidding. (CC)
(Don Giovanni, http://www.likeanomen.com/talkhard/)



TEAR IT UP – " Taking You Down With Me" LP

Like calling your dead friend's house and hearing his voice on the answering machine, it's weird to put this record on knowing that the band is no more. Still, they've left behind an epitaph that befits their legacy. No one's saying that TEAR IT UP broke a ton of new ground, but they were instrumental in the movement to pull hardcore back towards its roots in punk rock, and for that we must be grateful. The album is a bitter kiss-off, and the lyrics appear prophetic—"...every word I've written has been said before..."—sounds like someone who's looking for a change, eh? The last song is called "When Will It Stop" and I guess the answer is now. (AM)
(Havoc, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.havocrex.com)



THOUGHT RIOT – "Sketches of Undying Will" CD

THOUGHT RIOT plays super melodic punk rock that owes a lot to later AFI, the OFFSPRING, and ANTI FLAG. Tons of harmonies and huge-sounding gang vocals. At times they show a lot more hardcore influence, but they definitely never get too tough. I think their strongest point is their lyrics—though at times they sound a little cliché, they remind me a lot of a band like PROPAGANDHI...political with a personal touch. I especially like the song about elitism within the punk rock "scene." While this is not completely my thing musically, I think a lot of people who are really into AFI or ANTI FLAG might really like this. (WR)
(A-F, PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, www.a-frecords.com)

TIME FOR LIVING – "The Cheat is Not Dead" CD

TIME FOR LIVING crank out six brand new songs of modern mosh-core (with a heavy emphasis on the mosh) that are followed up with five songs that were re-recorded from their 2002 demo (which sound like brand new songs with the new production). While it is apparent that TIME FOR LIVING has matured in songwriting when comparing the new material with the old, all the songs pay great homage to the modern NYHC sound that influenced them. This will definitely have the kids going apeshit at Gilman. I am mighty impressed at Rival Records for coming right out of the gate with a solid package that is the TIME FOR LIVING full length. Only the second release, and Rival is already showing promise with a great layout and a very good recording. Both Rival Records and this release are a welcome addition to the blossoming Bay Area hardcore scene. (CC)
(Rival, PO Box 5242, Concord, CA 94524, www.rivalrecords.net)

TOTAL SHUTDOWN – "The Album" CD

I just saw these guys live and hated 'em, so now I'm listening to this cross-armed and leaning waaaaaaaaaay back in the chair. Make me move. They are screaming at me to move my ass, but it's still firmly planted and my eyes are narrowing. OK, fair enough, I have zero use for grindcore and most modern noise is just a con job that requires the listener to "buy in" to its precepts, but even a fogey like me still reserves the right to be bored. This CD has nothing to say. It's like, what, the 2003 version of a FLOWER LEPERDS 7" on Mystic. (RW)
(Tigerbeat 6, www.tigerbeat6.com)

TREGANZA - "Inheritance" CD

From the name and album cover, I was kind of expecting a Spanish SICK OF IT ALL. Boy, was I off. Hmm...it is interesting to hear something that is not punk rock recorded by Bart at House of Faith. This is a long way from SPAZZ, FIFTEEN, or HICKEY. Musically it isn't *too* far off from a really melodic FUGAZI, or maybe like a sped up A MINOR FOREST. I actually really like what's happening on that front. Impressive for a three piece. There's a lot of cool melodic but discordant stuff going on, and I really like the drumming here...simple but powerful. The vocals are hard to pinpoint, maybe like a really mellowed-out JOAN JETT. Anyhow, this may not be very punk, but it's pretty cool anyway. (WR)
(www.treganzamusic.net)

TUOMIOPÄIVÄN LAPSET – "Discography" 2xCD

Near complete collection of single, and compilation tracks of this great but slightly underrated

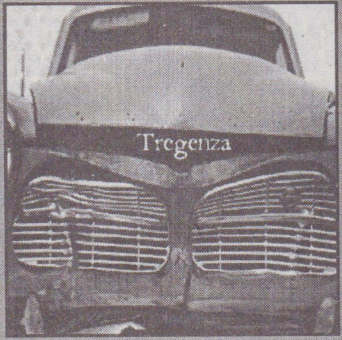
Finnish hardcore band. 59 tracks in total of raw, slightly inept Finnish thrash that pulls heavily from the classics (KAAOS and MELLAKKA for sure) to create a burly aural assault on the senses. Hectic and furious hardcore. (MT)
(Power It Up, Postfach 1114, 38156 Vechelde, GERMANY, www.power-it-up.de)

TURUN TAUTI / YHTEISKUNNAN YSTAVAT - split LP

Lets get this first part over: TURUN TAUTI have been around for quite some time and play pretty traditional-sounding Finnish hardcore that to me just sounds boring. Not "bad," *per se* but not "good." It may have been the result of the one ska-ish song, but I just couldn't get into them. Now let's move on: YHTEISKUNNAN YSTAVAT, with the unpronounceable name (well, for us dumb Americans at least), brings forth some absolutely killer short angry songs with just enough melody to keep it interesting. It sounds straight off a tape comp from '82—they bust out with short blasts of politically charged anger. Some of the songs reminded me of APPENDIX, but they really should just be described as straightforward, old school, angry hardcore punk. (NT)
(Kamaset Levyt c/o Nakari, Mechelininkatu 24 B 30, 00100 Helsinki, FINLAND)

ULTIMO ASALTO - "En Pie De Guerra" EP

Fuck yes! The consistently great Bords De Seine Record label, in conjunction with Camdentown Records, has a skinhead triumph for you! ULTIMO ASALTO, from Spain, play some excellent street rock and Oi on this EP. From the first notes on the title track, "En Pie De Guerra," right through "Justica," side A is spirited Oi music with power! Side B is more of the same, with the melodic "Barcelona" Oi number leading off. You get gruff lead vocals, good harmonies, and stinging guitar parts. Side B finishes with "Erik," and again the vocals are steeped in battery acid and cooled with beer. The guitars chug furiously along to send this song over the top. This is a very good record! (BR)
(Bord De Seine, BP 85, 75561 Paris, CX 12, FRANCE, www.bordsdeseine.fr.st, bdskinhead@aol.com)



UNDER PRESSURE – "Still No Future" LP

I had some pretty high hopes for this, considering this Canadian band's members are on the cover wearing t-shirts of GAUZE, MOTORHEAD, and CONFUSE. Once things got rolling, it honestly didn't live up to my expectations, but it was still a damn solid release. This is tough and angry hardcore that plows you down with a lot of brute force and aggressive vocals. The music is fast-paced, with occasional moments of hyper speed and power. Heck, they even throw in FAITH and VOID covers for those of you who are counting. (RC)
(Sound Pollution, PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017, www.sound-pollution.com)

THE VADERS – CD

Great street punk from Germany. Like all good street punk it has to be upbeat and not too predictable with enough hooks and power to carry it, and THE VADERS are as good as anything I've heard. Reminiscent of old DROPKICK MURPHIES, RANCID, the GC 5 (R.I.P.), HUDSON FALCONS, and the first AMERICAN STEEL album, these guys can actually right tunes with energy and catchy choruses. There are seventeen tracks on here and when it was done I played it all again. I can't give higher praise than that. *Really* good. (AD)
(Plastic Bomb, Postfach 100205, D-47002, Duisburg, GERMANY www.thevaders.net)

VAGIANTS – "Short and Hard" CD

Straight outta Canada, but sounding like they would be more at home in Detroit—these Canucks kick out some pretty righteous jams. Hard rocking fuzzed out garage rock, with belting soulful female vocals—not unlike the more rockin' BELLRAYS gear. Don't be put off by the horrible name, this is good stuff. (TB)
(Sin Klub Entertainment, PO Box 2507, Toledo, OH 43606)

THE VECTORS – "Still Ill" LP

Sick…. These Swedes rip out some serious rockin' punk shit. Some heart felt UNDERTONES-like choruses all mixed up with a cleanly demo tape sounding guitar and bass and great late 70s ADVERTS drum like stuff makes this the best! If you are punk, buy this! I would like to eat up PANTY RAID, the PAGANS and PEACHES and barf this back up. Thank you. (JA)
(Busted Heads, Space Mail Box 046,Renstienasgatan 28,11631 Stockholm, SWEDEN)

THE VERDICTS – "Rock and Roll Noise Makers" LP

This SoCal psychobilly trio can really tear it up. That friggin' slap bass sounds awesome, and it really comes through even when they turn it up and sounding metal with break-neck speed! This shit's all about Sex, Cars and Rock 'n' Roll! Comes on red vinyl with a 2'x3' poster! Strong! (HM)
(Middle Class Pig, Erlenweg 4, 72076 Tübingen GERMANY, www.MiddleClassPig.com)

THE VIGILANTES – "Empty Bottles & Broken Hearts" CD

The VIGILANTES play super melodic punk rock in the tradition of bands like SHAM 69 or COCKNEY REJECTS. This is the kind of album where every song sounds like it was made to be an anthem, although few actually make it. Musically, shows the influence of bands like the CLASH, STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, RAMONES and the JAM. Lyrically it is kind of shallow, but it is punk rock, then. Not really my thing, but if you are deep into what I still call "street punk," it's possible that you'll like this. (WR)
(Bandworm, Schellheimerplatz 8, D-39108 Magdeburg, GERMANY, www.bandwormrecords.de)

VIIMEINEN KOLONNA – "Irvikuva" CD

New full-length from Finland's VIIMEINEN KOLONNA, who continue on in their attempt to sound as much like TERVEET KADET as they can. This release finds them slowing down their hectic pace, allowing some of the riffs to breathe a bit more, displaying a bit of a rock influence ala POISON IDEA at times. Quality stuff. (MT)

(Hardcore Holocaust, PO Box 26742, Richmond, VA 23261, www.hardcoreholocaust.com)

VORKRIEGSJUGEND – "Wir Sind Die Ratten; Kreuzberg Hardcore-Punk 1982-1985" 2xLP & EP

Ahh.... VORKRIEGSJUGEND, German hardcore heroes. Once again the fine folx at Weird System do us all a favor and give us a complete collection of another top-notch early German hardcore band. VORKRIEGSJUGEND played raw blast of fast angry hardcore mixed with a slight tinge of melody—the signature German hardcore sound—a bit akin to ABRASIVE WHEELS. Angrier though, and definitely more raw. They managed to release a couple of EPs, and an LP along the way—and this double LP compiles it all, including an additional unreleased six song live EP. Great stuff. (MT)

(Weird System, Alstertwiete 32, 20099 Hamburg, GERMANY, www.weirdsystem.de)

THE VOTE - "Vote Me Out" CD

Yank band. German label. Almost post-punk melodic hardcore. I'm sure they'd be thrilled to comparisons to LIFETIME, V CARD, or even early GANG OF FOUR. Unfortunately, for all concerned, they still have a ways to go before they get anywhere close. (RK)

(Ass-Card, www.asscardrecords.com)

WARCRY – "Harvest of Death" EP

WARCRY uses classic DISCHARGE song structures for its sharply recorded protest hardcore – except here there's more of a bassy punch and less grinding intensity. On "Reality or Dream," the band adds welcome variety by moving toward a chugga-chugga guitar sound... but mostly we're dealing with a very familiar up-tempo apocalypic HC here. (SS)

(Partners In Crime, PO Box 11787, Portland, OR 97211)

WEATHER – CD

This sounds like the BAY CITY ROLLERS (a plaid-clad teeny-bopper group from Scotland who stormed the charts on both sides of the Atlantic in the mid 1970s with a catchy blend of bubblegum pop and guitar-based rock 'n' roll—loved by some, dismissed by others). I can't put it any more succinctly than that. (JH)

(Pidgeon English, PO Box 12561, Raleigh, NC 27605, www.pidgeon english.com)

WESTERN ADDICTION – "Remember to Dismember" EP

WESTERN ADDICTION plays mid-tempo punk rock that reminds me of US BOMBS, though they definitely have a heavier sound, maybe like if you added some TURBONEGRO and DISCHARGE. Lyrically I'm not sure what they're going on about, but there are some cool images in the words. Everything here is solid, but nothing stands out. The layout is nothing special—the same treatment every Fat Wreck 7" gets these days. (WR)

(Fat Wreck Chords, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690)

WIDESPREAD BLOODSHED/BRODY'S MILITIA - split LP

The WIDESPREAD BLOODSHED side is filled with 25 songs of insane super speed Swedish hardcore sure to please the deaf ears of many of you. Incredible! From Southern Ohio, BRODY'S MILITIA delivers dizzying trash-core. This is pretty all over the place and scattered. They proudly cover "Hard Candy Cock" and "Commit Suicide" by G.G. ALLIN. This is a pretty insane split. (SR)

(Sound Pollution, PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017; www.sound-pollution.com)

THE WINKS – "Spoil Me" EP

Poppy, peppy rock and roll with super-bratty female vocals. The music is fun and super catchy. Makes me want to get drunk and dance. Bonus points for singer being named Amanda Hugnkiss. I gotta go crank call Moe's Tavern. (CK)

(Super Secret, PO Box 1585, Austin, TX 78767, www-winksrock@msn.com)

WOLFBRIGADE – "In Darkness You Feel No Regrets" LP

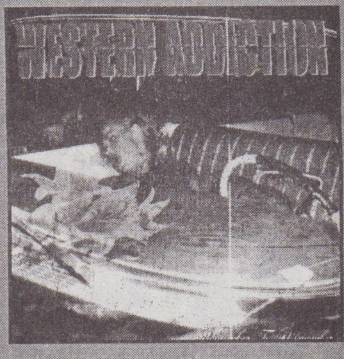
Oh yeah—how about some earth-shaking Scandinavian crustcore to get your day going? WOLFBRIGADE, from Sweden, has put out another crusher of an LP. Everything is deep and dark here. From the rumbling bass lines to the growling vocals, it all comes across as incredibly heavy. They even pull out a POISON IDEA cover. I know that a partial tour of the USA is in the works so be on the lookout for that and be sure to pick up this LP! (RC)

(Feral Ward, www.feralward.com)

WOLVES - "Simulation. Transparency, Representation" CD

OK, I will be completely honest; this kind of stuff makes me want to gouge my eardrums out with a church key. I am sure you will love this album if you like to sit around crying over spilled milk while sewing heart patches on your sweater. It has people who were involved in ORCHID and it is very similar in sound but

a little less chaotic. Four songs in over twenty minutes, plus an overabundance of sound clips snagged from political speeches. The booklet has an art school lay out that mixes fashion design with vague lyrics talking about the revolution and girls. I don't even know... (NT)
(Coalition)



WORDBUG – "Losing It All" CD

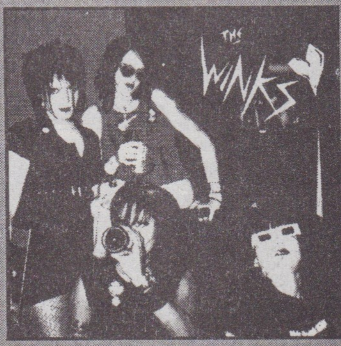
I have most of this band's stuff, but they never really stood out to me. But considering the UK punk pop scene was pretty strong in 1991, with the Decoy Records bands and such, that's no fault of this band. This sounds pretty good, now, although I could use a little more bite at times. This is a collection of everything by this UK punk pop with emo overtones. It is great that Boss Tuneage is re-releasing this stuff from the UK on disc. (RL)
(Boss Tuneage)

THE Y – "O.O.C. in the USA" EP

I want to like this for many reasons: the sheer stupidity and mundaneness of the lyrics, the incompetent playing, the lethargic vocals, and the shitty fidelity. This is punk rock at its most primitive. I wouldn't be surprised if these guys got together the day before recording this. It's kind of painful in a fun, masochistic way. (CK)
(Sooooo Intense, 507 E. Carcass, Tampa, FL 33603)

YAPHET KOTTO – "European Tour" 12"

I have been anticipating hearing this, because I haven't heard anything recorded of theirs since their last LP. The two major changes in the band are a new bassist and new drummer. The first song takes a while to kick in, but once it does, it sounds like the same YAPHET KOTTO that I know. YAPHET KOTTO: a shining example that hardcore and melody and, yes, "emo" can be mixed. So many bands do it, and it seems like even more do it wrong. The new bassist doesn't change much, but they do sound a little different with José playing drums. The differences are subtle, though, José being an amazingly good drummer, the record is a short one—three songs and limited for their recent European tour. Not their best stuff, but a sign that this band is alive and kicking. (WR)
(Scene Police, c/o DPM, Humboldtstr. 15, 53115 Bonn, GERMANY, www.scenepolice.de)

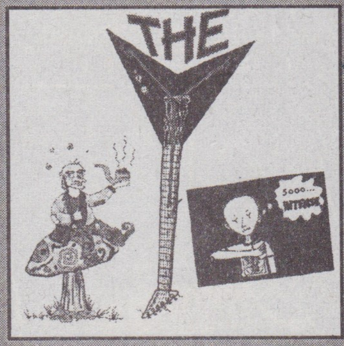


YOUNG ONES – CD

They should hold the next Olympics in Japan, 'cause the torch is being passed from hand to hand in the wake of the REGISTRATORS decline into spacey blandness. I think these guys want to take the victory lap in the Tokyo Dome, because while they aren't a carbon copy of the 'STRATORS, they do approximate the more balls-out qualities that made them so adored on both sides 'o the koi pond. It is also another recent Japanese record that avoids the terribly arid production that has dragged down too many records from there. These guys have been on comps and 7"s for too long—here's a full-length that I hope gets some distro outside of Japan, because it deserves it. If this was on vinyl… (RW)
(Needle, Astylar House 101, 2-44-13 Yoyogi, Sibuya-Ku, Tokyo, 151-0053, JAPAN)

ZENO TORNADO & THE BONEY GOOGLE BROTHERS - "What Is Wrong With Modern Youth" CD

Described on the cover as "Dirty Dope Infected Blue Grass Hillbilly Hobo XXX Country Music." I know I couldn't do any better than that. Some truly twisted country music singing about drinking, drugging and fucking. Why not? It's better than singing some shitty pro-US imperialism country song. It's a lot more fun too. (CK)
(Voodoo Rhythm, Jurastrasse 15, 3013 Bern, Switzerland, info@voodoorhythm.com)



V/A – "Disturbing the Peace" LP

Whoa, do you need a testament to how good the Bay Area punk scene is right now? Then you should pick up this LP and prepare to be blown away. You will hear from BLOWN TO BITS, BORN/DEAD, BRAINOIL, CASE OF EMERGENCY, DEADFALL, DYSTROPHY, EXIT WOUND, HATEMAIL KILLERZ, IRON LUNG, SCURVY DOGS, S.T.F.U., and VOETSEK. There are no stinkers here, which is saying a lot for any compilation. What do the bands sound like, you ask? Well, it is fast, angry, and punk my friend…it is as simple as that. One thing I want to point out is that I think there may be a few additional bands on the CD release of this. I think I remember seeing a few band names on the CD that are not on the LP. Plus there are a few photos on the insert of bands that are not on this LP. Regardless, check this out for sure! (RC)
(Six Weeks, 225 Lincoln Ave, Cotati, CA 94931, www.sixweeksrecords.com)

V/A – "Hangover Heartattack; A Tribute To Poison Idea" LP

What other band could lay claim to being the kings of punk? POISON IDEA are the masters—brilliant brutal hardcore punk with an lyrical perspective cemented firmly in non-pretension and honesty. They are what they are, total fuck-ups, degenerates and the life they sing is the one they live—that is certain. The one-two punch of Jerry's lyrical onslaught (and that voice!) paired Pig's masterful and nuanced guitar riffing creates such a powerhouse that it is of course no wonder that a tribute record would be recorded in their honor. Sadly, as is the case of many tribute records, this is sorta hit-or-miss—with emphasis being on miss. There are moments where the bands on this nail the intensity and power that makes POISON IDEA what they are—RDP's cover of "Pure Hate," DIAVOLO ROSSO's version of "Lifestyles," RAT BASTARDS' take on "Laughing Boys" and KILL YOUR IDOLS' "Made To Be Broken" are the standouts. What ruins it though is

shit like BONEHOUSE's rather inept version of "Hangover Heartattack" and BAFFDECKS' piss-poor version of "Plastic Bomb." I mean if your going to cover POISON IDEA, at least learn the guitar parts. Listening to these tracks made me cringe. The giant booklet with their 1990 tour diary, several old interviews that are a good read, and tons of photos. So what's the judgment? Pass. Instead go out and get yourself copies of *Kings Of Punk, War All The Time, Feel The Darkness,* and of course *Pick Your King*. They've all been reissued, and you won't be disappointed. (MT)
(Farewell, Micha Meyer, PO Box 100205, 47002 Duisburg, GERMANY, farewellrec@plastic-bomb.de)

V/A – "HC Scene #5" CD

An all over the map picture of the current punk scene in Brazil—everything from the poppy punk of SURFACE and THECORE, to the raging thrash of xAMORx, to the straight up punk attack of PÉ SKEWER and REPULSÃO EXPLÍCITA. Overall decent, though I found myself skipping over many of the tracks. (MT)
(Lab, Cx. Postal 990, Londrina – PR 86001-970, BRAZIL, www.hcscene.com)

V/A – "It's Not Just Boys' Fun" CD

A double disc of gal-fronted stuff. Gal vocals galore, and I have a weakness for them. Including the FLIPSIDES, LULABELLES, TILT, SIXTY STORIES, HANG ON THE BOX, WALLRIDE, and TUULI among the 46 tracks. There's no track history on this, so I'm sure some of this is previously released, but what a great sampler for fans of this stuff. (RL)
(Wolverine, Kaiserswerther Str. 166, 40474 Dusseldorf, GERMANY)

V/A – "This is the Life Vol. 7" CD

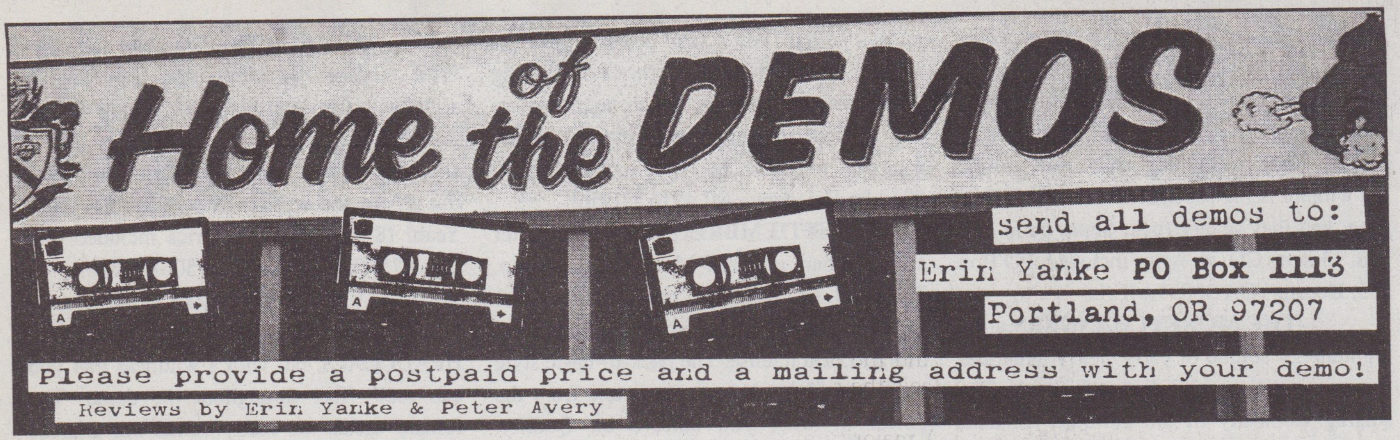
This is the seventh installment in this MCR series that showcases new and upcoming punk and thrash bands from all over Japan. On this compilation you will find MILK COFFEE, BUTTER FINGERS, PSYCHO TO BLACK, NOISE ATTACK, DEFIANT, DIVERS, MIND OF ASIAN ZILLION, S41, ORIGINAL POLKITCH, MAXWELL MURDER, THEYOUNGDAYSNORETURN, CROW DRAGON TEA and CATTY WITCH. The musical styles found here are pretty varied, from grinding metal to garage, with a bunch of fast thrashy stuff wedged in between. Check it out. (RC)
(MCR Company, 157 Kamiagu, Maizuru, Kyoto 624-0913, JAPAN, www.dance.ne.jp/~mcr)

V/A – "Times Still Here" EP

For current straight edge hardcore, it doesn't get much better than this, in my eyes. As I have noted before, foreign straight edge bands are usually less focused on production, clothing, and hairstyles, and most often the lyrics are more…aware. The six bands on this comp, all Portuguese, do straight edge with the energy of bands like MINOR THREAT and 7 SECONDS, and more of a punk rock attitude than a lot of modern US bands. Bands like MAD RATS, TIME X, THROUGH THESE EYES, NEW WINDS, FIGHT FOR CHANGE, and DAY OF THE DEAD, some of whose names have been coming up a lot lately, and who all do straight edge well, but in different ways. (WR)
(Best Times, c/o Pedro Batista, PO Box 229, 2686-997 Sacavem, PORTUGAL)

V/A - "What the Hell We're Still Doing Here: Rumble Fish, 10 Years of DIY" CD

It's really great and all that RUMBLE FISH wanted to get nostalgic about their past 10 years and invite 22 of their friends' bands to be on this little compilation in the name of "DIY." Don't get me wrong, it really warms my heart to no end, but this just isn't good. The one standout track was by SHOCK TREATMENT, who had a MINUTEMEN thing going for them, but other then that, nothing. Nada. Zip. Zilch. Nothing caught my ear and made me beg for more and a lot of it fell into that "soft slow emotional" bullshit category. DIY is great and I love Home Depot as much as the next guy, but the burning spirit of DIY can't save a bad compilation. (NT)
(www.rumblefishdiy.org)



ALREADY DEAD splits their style between a mid-paced standard screaming punk and a slower and darker style that has either spoken or shouted vocals, which occasionally delve into the common grindcore deep-voice-from-hell. The vocals dominate this recording, but you can still hear past it to the music, more so on the less frantic songs. (Free, with postage, or trade. 5-song cassette, lyrics included. 86 Randlagh Rd., Dublin, 6 Ireland. alreadydead@grindcore.net.) (Erin)

THE AWAKENING totally rips and that's all there is to it. From Ohio, they sound like family of the likes of DSB. Blazing, no nonsense, the drums don't stop and they're being hit hard! There's some soloing going on, but mostly it's just unstoppable. Main and back up vocals shout along, and I want to, too. Totally great. ($5 ppd. 14-song cassette, no lyrics included. c/o Sash, 3981-1 Kou-cho, Suzuka, MIE Japan. www.solar-funeral.org.) (Erin)

CALABRESE sounds like if the OFFSPRING was more into ripping off THE MISFITS than AGENT ORANGE. Mid-tempo and clean, well produced, and full of wo-wo-wos. ($7 ppd. 6-song CD, no lyrics included. 1700 N. Evergreen, Chandler, AZ 85225.) (Erin)

DOLPHIN plays real fast and choppy hardcore, with guitars that plow through for the most part, but have lead moments as well. The pace varies with slow, sort of metal moments, but mostly you can't stop these folks. The vocals are shouted, and sometimes the strain of anger breaks through to a different pitch. The tone of the backup vocals is a deeper kind of shout. (3 ppd. 7-song cassette, lyrics included. 2223 H St., Bellingham, WA 98225.) (Erin)

DRUNK YARD DOGS play lo-fi hardcore that moves fast, in that lurching-around good-time dancing way. The vocals are aggro-shouted, totally fitting with the mood and the music. No nonsense here. ($3 ppd. 4-song cassette, no lyrics included. 11220 Fox River Dr., Newark, IL 60541.) (Erin)

DUI plays a mid-tempo straightforward punk, the kind where you'd sort of find yourself bouncing around a bit instead of full-on dancing. The vocals are more yelled than sung. (3-song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 75984, Washington, DC 20013.) (Erin)

THE EIGHT COUNTS play straightforward punk rock that is influenced equally by Ian MacKaye and rock and roll radio. The songs are longer than your traditional punk songs, for the most part mid-tempo. Pretty solid. (12-song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 1264, Buna, TX 77612.) (Erin)

FLINT are slow to mid-paced rock, with vocals that are sung with a hint of gruffness, especially on the faster songs, which also have more of a guitar crunch to them. (4-song CD, no lyrics included. 50 Stevenson Place, Staten Island, NY 10309.) (Erin)

HAWAII 5-0 is a pop punk band that for the most part plays fast, although the songs have dynamics of intensity. The vocals are sung in a whisper-in-your-ear sort of way, although they break out to sing with full lungs of air, too. The vocals have a nasally tone, which works well with the jangly pop bits, and the one acoustic song. (3-song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 7120 FLC, Durango, CO 81301.) (Erin)

INVERTED and **THE TENNESSEE BLACK PLAGUE** come to us on a split this month. INVERTED is a powerful straightforward punk band that mixes a more rockin' style, with good results. THE TENNESSEE BLACK PLAGUE has more metal in one guitar lick than the whole other side, and is noisier. Vocally the guy has a snottier tone, with an apocalyptic edge. They experiment with delay and other effects in one song, too. ($2 ppd. 501 S. Sycamore St., Genoa, IL 60135.) (Erin)

I OBJECT is with us twice this month with two split demos; here's to them for mutual support. The first is with **THE PESTS**, who bring skate-core into our modern times while continuing with the traditional aspects of the genre. Fast part, fast part, mosh part, fast part. Good gruff vocalist, totally catchy package, and not stale in its nostalgia. I OBJECT has dual vocals, and is distorted and angry in all the best ways. Their tempo is all over the mid-paced continuum. The drive of the music comes equally from the guitar and the crashing cymbal and snare moments. Yep, totally good split. ($2 ppd., but trades are preferred. 7-song cassette (4 TP, 3 IO), no lyric sheet. Address mail to Ryan, PO Box 1084, Buffalo, NY 14215.) (Erin)

Then, **I OBJECT** pairs up with **PSYCHO SICKNESS.** PSYCHO SICKNESS has a demeanor that's tough as hell. It's paced so you'll do that lurchy head-swinging move about half the time, in between getting swept up in the pit. They mix it up a bit, doing a kind of ska-tinged slower song. The vocals are deep and rabid, and sometimes they overpower the music, but most of the time the balance is good. I OBJECT has more of the female vocalist present on this demo, but the same distorted and energetic hardcore is still happening for them. This also has a faster pace in general than the other one. ($2 ppd., but you can trade, too! 17-song CD (7 PS, 10 IO) , no lyric sheet. Address mail to Ryan, PO Box 1084, Buffalo, NY 14215.) (Erin)

IS THIS REAL plays your standard emo-hardcore, fast, with pauses and guitar bits that sort of ring out or do that strumming thing real high up on the next for changes, and vocals that are well-enunciated shouting. They change it up with a faster than normal mosh parts. And the gang joins in for some well-punctuated back up yells. ($1 ppd. 5-song CD, lyrics included. PO Box 70, Island Heights, NJ 08732.) (Erin)

MADE IN CHINA is a high-energy, mid-paced rock band with harmonica popping up every once in a while. The one vocalist sounds a lot like DICKS singer Gary

Floyd, his way of holding out notes, especially. The other singer is totally good too, but his specialty is high-pitched affectations at the end of the songs more like carried away soul singers. They're bopping your head around fun without being saccharine, even their slow song, and they totally rock. Super good. ($2 ppd. 13-song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 285, Decatur, GA 30031.) (Erin)

THE MONEYCHANGERS are a high-energy combo of early sleazy punk and newer energetic synthesizer-style punk. The singing is mostly in the not-quite-shouted, not-quite-snotty realm. And of the 13 songs, 8 are live, which is sometimes annoying, but their live bits just prove the energy is there, and they're totally solid and seemingly having a lot of fun with what they do. I've never seen them, but now I'll try my best to find them! (13-song cassette, no lyric sheet. 4128 SE 24th Ave., Portland, OR 97202.) (Erin)

A split demo by **MOVE REAL FAST** and **DIE OPTIMALE HARTE** graces our presence. MOVE REAL FAST is total speedy thrash core with feelings of anger and joy. You know how those old bands would do vocals and start talking too quick before the song was over so you could hear them talking? And you know how that added heart and a reality to them as people, not just as a cool band? That's the kind of joy I mean. You can't hide that spirit if you have it, and you can't fake it if you don't. Anyway, the vocals are shouted, the production is rough and raw, and they rip. Also included is an ANTI-CIMEX cover. DIE OPTIMALE HARTE mixes it up a lot, but they cover ground from older-sounding catchy, but not wimpy style to songs that make you want to grab your friends and shake your fist along, but they also pick up the pace to dancing like crazy. The vocals are sung and kind of NEW MODEL ARMY-ish. What a totally great split—totally different things are going on, but they're both of high quality. Fucking get this. ($2 ppd. US, $4 ppd. World. 38-song cassette (22 by MRF, 16 by DOH), no lyric sheets. 1320 W. Escalon, Fresno, CA 93711.) (Erin)

NEEDLESS GUILT are a little on the mosh side of things, mixing up a generic mid-80s hardcore sound with metal moments, and not like the new stuff that incorporated the metal—it's like punk part, punk part, metal part. The songs are sung with a spoken gruffness. (5-song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 75984, Washington D.C., 20013.) (Erin)

THE RON JEREMY SEX EXPLOSION plays a rougher kind of pop punk, like the 1989 school before things got so over-produced and smooth. Good singing with a mean edge to it, which helps cut the pop without reducing the catchiness of the songs. (8-song CD, no lyrics included. 3640 92nd St. Caledonia, MI 4916.) (Erin)

SETIEMBREONCE blazes after a couple bars of "Iron Man" warm you up. Total full on, from the pace to the guitar sound to the vocals, which are yelling loud, heartfelt, and intense. The back-to-basic style hardcore, where the emotion came from the power of what you believe in. Quality. Awesome. And still active in Uruguay, although Diego just moved to California. Welcome! (Free! Just write! But send some $ for postage, as a good punk should. 9-song CD, lyrics included! 13320 Oxnard St., Van Nuys, CA 91401.) (Erin)

SUBURBAN DEATH MACHINE is total modern hardcore, dark and tough and feelin' it so hard! Fast and driving for the most part, with break parts that are mid-tempo and lurchy. The vocals are shouted, and thoughtfully venomous. Plus, how can you not love a band that actually sings songs about being a punk? It's what we all know, right? Totally great. ($3 ppd. 8-song cassette, lyrics included! 5618 Porussett St., Pittsburgh, PA 15217.) (Erin)

THEFT plays a brutal mix of mid-paced and grinding-away-at-you dark hardcore. It's got guitar intricacies that sound metal, as well as the wall of ringing-out guitars while a bunch of the guys are screaming. The vocals are shouted, but there's some screamo present as well. ($2 ppd., trades encouraged. 12-song CD, no lyric sheet. Address mail to Ryan, PO Box 1084, Buffalo, NY 14215.) (Erin)

TOM SAVAGE EXPLOSION is a theme demo, all about Tom Savage, who must love a base of total thrashy hardcore blended with 25% regular straightforward punk and a 10% presence of over-the-top aggro vocals and darkness. They include lots of skits to help you feel their love. (6-song cassette, lyric sheet included. 5 Frederic St. Apt. 1, Portland, ME 04102.) (Erin)

THE TUPS have a lounge sensibility in their punk in the first song, which they don't go back to for the rest of their lo-fi straightforward punk demo. It's pretty back and forth fast to mid-tempo paced, with a more spoken snotty tone in the vocals for the slower parts, and more shouting for the faster background. ($5 ppd. 8-song CD, no lyrics included. 853 110th Ave., Dawson Creek, BC V1G 2V9, Canada.) (Erin)

UZI SUICIDE is a good and powerful mix of the mid-tempo headbanging style, with the faster blast beat timing. Vocals are gruff and lyrics are good, and they have a shouting crew of backup vocalists. And they did go out and write their own SPAZZ song. Yeah! (8-song cassette, lyrics included. PO Box 675, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.) (Erin)

VIVA LAS VEGAS plays mid-paced, fuzzed-out garage rock a la THE HEADCOATS, but with a wildness that you can really feel throughout the demo. The female vocals are really belted out and the back-ups are present and sweet. The male vocals are more restrained, but just barely. Rockin! ($4 ppd. 4-song CD, no lyrics included. 101 Mezon, Matsushima 3-34-8, Matsushima, Edogawa-ku, Tokyo 132-0031, Japan.) (Erin)

VOICE OF AGGRESSION and **EAT YER GREENS** unite for a split demo. VOICE OF AGGRESSION plays fast, about 2/3 metal with 1/3 punk traits. The two vocalists are a snotty talking guy whom when he screams, sounds like he's going to puke. Then the other guy has deep and ogre-like vocals. EAT YER GREENS is more blazing punk, while mixing it up with cool rhythms, and variance in singing style, male and female, screaming and singing, and talking bits. This split is a good pairing. ($3 or 2 Pounds, worldwide ppd. 7-song CD (3 VOA, 4 EYG), lyrics included. 19 Albury Place, Aberdeen, Scotland, UK AB11 6TQ.) (Erin)

XWITNESSX is pissed off, and reflects that with the unrelenting shouted vocals, the mostly fast-paced straightforward standard straight edge sound, mixed up with a slightly slower paced mid-parts that still sound full-on. (6-song CD, lyrics included. 21 Nancy Lane, Amherst, NY 14228.) (Erin)

WRECKAGE has a titch of metal in their fast and furious hardcore. But the element that makes them stand out is the cool, dirty 1970s New York City influence that's not always present, but is enough of the time to tell them apart from the crowd. The vocals are shouted without a trace of singing. Good stuff! (6-song cassette, lyrics included. 24-75 38th St. #4-B, Astoria, NY 11103.) (Erin)

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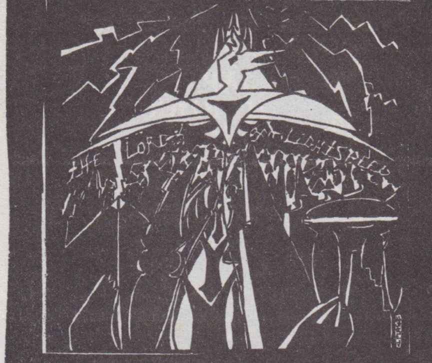

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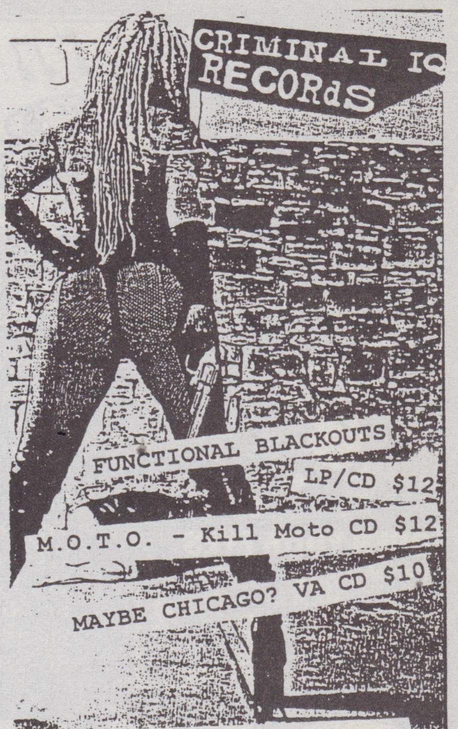

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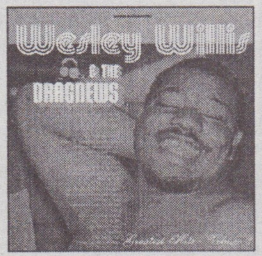

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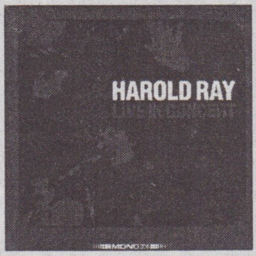

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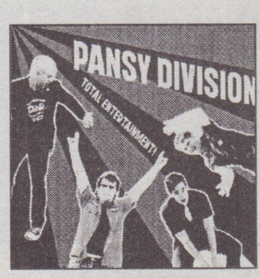

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ZINES

Reviews by: (AC) Arwen Curry, (AR) Aragorn, (JB) Julia Booz Ullrey, (MD) Mikel Delgado, (BD) Ben Ditch, (SD) Sara Double-Ears, (MF) Maree Faygo, (JH) Jeff Heermann, (HH) Harald Hartmann, (CJ) Chloe Jensen, (JM) Jeff Mason, (MN) Mimi Nguyen, (CR) Casey Ress, (MT) Mike Thorn, (GZ) Gordon Zola.

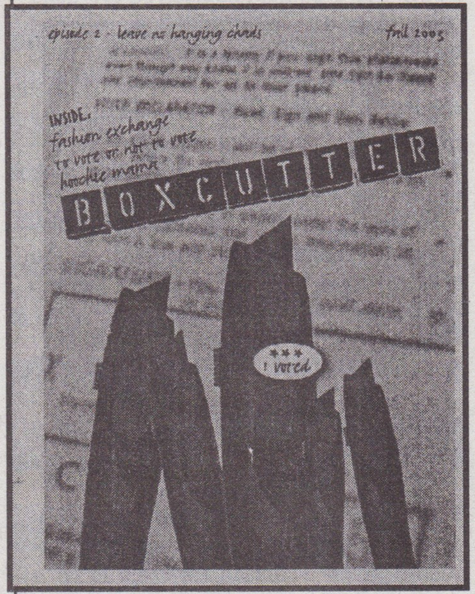
Please send your zine in for review. Write down any information you want included in the review; method of printing, number of pages, issue number and post paid price. If you want us to include a foreign post paid price, tell us. If you accept trades, tell us. The only information we will include is what you provide us.

BAD BUNNY #1 / $1
8.5 x 11 – copied – 28 pgs
I'm sorry, but the first issue of a zine shouldn't be all ads and no substance. Let's tally—3 blank pages, 1 badly drawn cover page, 14 pages of ads (one is for this zine, and 6 are full-page ads for Bad Bunny Records releases). That leaves 10 pages—hmmm. 1 page of poetry, 4 pages of reviews (2 reviews per page?) and a bad comic strip. The rest is drivel, and the layout sucks too. An insult to the trees. I hope the records are better. (MD)
Bad Bunny Records / 52 Strickland Ln. / Ardmore, TN 38449

BEARING EDGE #2 / $2
8.5 x 11 – copied – 28 pgs
I'm not a drummer, but I wish I was one (don't most bass players have drum envy?) This is for serious drummers, as it has a lot of equipment and technique talk. It's also for most musicians, as the interviews and writing also touch on influences and the experiences of being in a band. This one interviews the drummers of Superchunk, Septic Death, and Macabre, among others. Great layout style, and many a dis on Neal Peart. Very cool. Issue #1 is also still available—same price—interviews with Brendan Canty, Robert Sweet, Mike Felumlee, and Max Ward, to name a few. (MD)
1360 Denniston Street 3rd Floor / Pittsburgh, PA 15217

THE BIG HURT #2 / $3
8.5 x 11 - copied - 28 pgs
If ham-fisted man-art and "shout outs" to the NYHC scene of the late 80s, early 90s are up your alley, then *The Big Hurt* may already be on your toilet tank. Interviews with Punch in the Face, Fourteen or Fight, and Jailbreak give an obvious depth to reprints of a *Sold Out* interview with Agnostic Front and pictures of men with axes and microphones. (AR)
TBH / 2271 Hiram Dr. / Wheaton, IL 60187

BIRTHMARKS AND BATTLE SCARS #1 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 44 pgs
It's getting cold here, so I guess it's an appropriate time to read depressing teen angst-type writing. *Birthmarks and Battle Scars* contains a heaping dose of poetry, reflections on childhood trauma and drama, and the damage done. Most of the stories involve the author's mom and her different partners. It's written well (except the poetry—which can't be written well!) and has a good format. (CR)
315 Larch St. / Scranton, PA 18509



BOXCUTTER #2
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 24 pgs
Boxcutter's premise is clear—to provide a forum for creative expressions of cultural identity. That may seem lofty for such a slight publication, but it's a goal they are pursuing with obvious attention and care. *Boxcutter* is a very Bay Area zine—and I don't mean like a Bay Area punk zine, which often as not carries a voice from somewhere else. Each issue of *Boxcutter* is a compilation, and while there is no overt premise of race, the voices of people of color are essential to the zine. In this respect it's very different than our usual review fare—it's *assumed* that the editors and contributors will be of color. As a white girl in the punk scene who has gotten so used to identifying with a (white) zine editor's voice, I find this to be a great wake-up call. In this issue, there's a long discussion about fashion, its personal and political resonance, and a great short piece called "Confessions of a Teenage Hoochie Mama," among other things. One thing—I wish they had a real address, and some more info on price, etc. (AC)
boxcutter@lists.riseup.net

CHAIRMEN OF THE BORED #14
8.5 x 11 – copied – 8 pgs
As cut-and-paste as you can possibly fucking imagine, *Chairmen of the Bored* is back yet again, straight from the bowels of the prison industrial complex. When they mean bored, they mean bored! Like the way you felt in 8th grade American History class times a thousand. It seems the editors are annoyed with me about calling the last issue "marginally comprehensible," and actually, I followed this one much better. I mean followed, like you might follow the lemming ahead of you off of a cliff. Kidding. I'm impressed that they manage to compile all this stuff. Some of it is pretty sketchy, but some of it is really, good, too—like the tender, short piece by C. Knowles about an old girlfriend who cut herself: "It was habitual. Or ritual—I'm still not really sure which." You should really write these guys a letter. And send stamps. (AC)
C. Knowles K-91158 / FSP Box 715071 / B2-B4-22 / Represa, CA 95671

CHOKING HAZARD #13 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 48 pgs
This is supposed to be the "Relationships Special" issue from these punkers, but the only writings on relationships are small blips that tend to not go too in-depth.

Coming from a circle of friends, this zine consists of essays, short fiction, poetry, and zine/book reviews. There's even a little music thrown in, with a short Dropkick Murphy's interview. Also included is the bonus eight-page swimsuit mini-zine. Some of the pieces have a feminist slant to them, even though the editor chooses not to align her self with the "f" word. Most of the thinking in here is fairly progressive, but then there are a few moments where some more traditional American values creep in that are a little disturbing. (JP)

Ziggy Cyanide / 12 Marylea Ave / 2nd Floor, Rear / Pittsburgh, PA 15227

OneEternalDaybreak@yahoo.com

CITIZINE #4 / $3

8.5 x 11 – printed – 60 pgs

Robert and I were talking about zines. Hey Robert, when's your zine coming out? I don't know, the writing is fastly becoming dated. Fastly? Don't you mean quickly? Fastly isn't a word. Let me put it this way, the writing is getting more dates than me. I understand exactly now what Robert meant about old writing after I read *Citizine*. For example, in the Greg Ginn interview, they ask him about the Black Flag reunion show for a benefit for cats, and he says he isn't quite sure who will be playing as Black Flag, because it is too far in the future, but that show happened in September. Or how about the California Recall election coverage? *Citizine* sounds all formal while rehashing information that was readily available everywhere else and doesn't belong in a punk magazine unless it has a punk slant and it totally doesn't. I forgot I wasn't reading a regular newspaper. Blech. And while we are on the subject of irrelevance, a lot of the interviewees seemed to be questioned about really old wounds and gossip, like how Klaus Fluoride was repeatedly asked about suing and getting sued by Jello Biafra and about how many fans picketed outside Dead Kennedys shows protesting them touring without Jello singing. At least there is an awesome interview with Mike Watt about life and music he makes now. I think my favorite part of this magazine is the astrology on the back cover, because it is lighthearted amid a bunch of we-take-ourselves-way-too-seriously crap. (JB)

www.citizine.com

COLDHANDSDEADHEART #17 / $2

4.5 X 5.5 – copied – 40 pgs

This issue of *ColdHandsDeadHeart* starts off with an *MRR* review of the last issue of this zine, along with some seemingly self-effacing comments by the author. It seems more likely that Mike is unhappy with the review he received last time and is using it as a challenge to the next reader to either refute or confirm said review. In some ways, this would be a confirmation of that review. These 40 pages are filled with a raw style of illustration, perhaps similar to Derek Hess. The drawings themselves are quite good. However, the artwork is surrounded by rambling text, at times annoyingly hard to read due to the lack of punctuation and spacing between words. It is hard to tell whether the text is connected to the art it surrounds or is just a pretentious, self-reflective word exercise. The key question here is whether or not the author/artist is trying to communicate anything to the reader. It's not bad—the writing is just the weaker element of the whole. (JP)

Mike Twohig / 72-1 Meadow Farm South / N. Chili, NY 14514

EARTH FIRST ACTION UPDATE #90 / $20 for 10 issues

8.5 x 11 - printed - 16 pgs

Every time I get a political periodical from the UK, I get the impression that their discussion about attacking the state is on a very different level than ours in the States. The cover article is a detailing of a direct action on the Bayer Corporation's GM division. In this country discussion (and resistance) of GM is still in its infancy. There is also an information-laden article on how to trash an office that raises your spirits. Which isn't to say that EF! strategy is necessarily effective or even useful, but it still deeply appeals to an aesthetic of resistance in a way that Global Exchange does not. (AR)

12 London Rd. / Brighton BN1 4JA UK

EQUALIZING DISTORT Issue 3 #9 / free

8.5 x 11 – copied – 24 pgs

The print arm of Toronto's *Equalizing Distort* radio program, this regular newsletter features reviews and interviews with bands and behind the scenes punk folx, wih a strong emphasis on the local Toronto scene, while keeping a international perspective. This is probably my most favorite recent issue, featuring interesting interviews with the men behind the films *Afropunk* and *End of the Century*, Florian from Heartfirst Records, a report from the punk goings on from Japan, and the bands Black Eyes Club and Hostage Life. Good Stuff. (MT)

91 St. George St. / Toronto. ON M5S 2E8 / Canada

THE FURY #17 / $1

5.5 X 8.5 - copied – 37 pgs

Formerly known as *Shazzbutt!*, this issue has some interesting interviews with Soophie Nun Squad and Frontside, two Arkansas bands, I believe. Also, though is a piece about coca, Bolivia, and the war on drugs, which I found very interesting, though it is probably the heaviest thing in this otherwise fairly funny and lighthearted zine. Read about the exploits of nerd night, take in some record reviews. Then go out and fuk shit up. (BD)

Mark / 5143 6th Ave / Countryside, FL / 60525

GEEK #3 / 2 stamps

5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 32 pgs

From reading this zine, I gather that Tempe has a smaller punk scene that isn't as divided amongst the different sub-genres of punk as in larger cities. A place where the crust punks, straight edge kids, and emo rockers all go to the same shows. This zine has a little bit of everything—part music zine, part personal zine. A lot of things in here read like subtler scene reports, highly centered on youth/young boy culture. The content relies heavily on contributions from other folks, mostly drawings/comics and short fiction/essays. The quality of the submissions ranges from decent to not so great. (JP)

Joe / 610 E McKellips #F118 / Tempe, AZ 85281

HAZARDOUS WASTE Oct. 2003 / one stamp

8.5 x 11 – copied – 4 pgs

Describing Pointless Fest 2003, editor Matt gives an alphabetical review of such things as "Distros," "Church Basement," "South Street," and "Hosts," in addition to bands including Inepsy, World Burns to Death, Tragedy, Totalitär, Born Dead Icons,

and others. Highlight: "It probably sucks to play to people who are more interested in fiddling with their light meters than rocking out." No, I changed my mind. Highlight is now the mix tape ideas section. I believe that making a great mix tape is an underrated art form. Hey Matt—stick with white letters on black background, because when you have both on one copy the black letters with white background aren't dark enough and I couldn't read it on Greyhound. (JB)
Matt Smith / 210 Dewey St. Apt. 3 / Worcester, MA 01610

INKLING #6 / $2
7 x 8.5 – copied – 32 pgs
Dear Melissa,
When I started reading *Inkling* I was at El Farolito dumping green salsa on the free chips and staring down the channel of what seemed to be an exclusively rice-filled burrito. Where's my avocado? I didn't want to live. Soon the insult of the absence of the desired burrito contents became inconsequential. Your stories pulled me in and I became completely unaware of eating or of being myself. The linoleum cuts are quaint, a perfect addition to each story. My favorite is "My Name," because each character has a unique voice even with only has a paragraph to develop it. I wanted to know more about them as they rose and fell and disappeared. What happens to Spidergirl? And to Josefa? Your next issue should explore these jumpstarts—there is so much potential and intrigue. Your writing is so deep and unexpected. Thank you.
Love, Julia
Melissa Klein / 3288 21st St. #79 / San Francisco, CA 94110

THE INSURGENT #15.1 / $15 per year
11 x 14 - newsprint - 24 pgs
This is a hit-or-miss "radical" student paper from the U of O in Eugene, Oregon. There are lots of Indymedia reprints and some attention drawn towards the American anarchist milieu. There is an editorial on Schwarzenegger (con), a cell phone tower on campus (con), and the APOC (anarchist people of color) conference that happened in Detroit in October (pro). There is a horribly laid-out but highly useful interview with Eugene local John Zerzan. It is especially clear, which is a refreshing change from typical Zerzan interviews, and very useful for someone who doesn't quite "get" the whole primitivism thing and would like to understand it. (AR)
UO Student Insurgent Suite 1 / 1228 University of Oregon, U of O / Eugene, OR 97403

JOSH HOLE #1 / free?
7 x 8.5 – copied – 22 pgs
This is a good idea. Two Florida zinesters have banded together to make this split: Josh Sullivan brings his comics, and Marck of *Sink Hole* contributes band interviews. The comics remind me a lot of Jhonen Vasquez (of *Johnny the Homicidal Maniac* and *Invader Zim* fame), and the style is clean, with irreverent and often violent storylines. The similarity to *JTHM* can make these comics seem derivative at times, but on the whole they're pretty funny. As for the interviews, the conversations with The Virus and Darkest Hour turn out whimsical and humorous; the questions are good, even though they're not the most profound. Altogether, it's a good split zine (and I'll refrain from commenting on the Ataris interview). (CJ)
2105 19th St. West / Bradenton, FL 34205
sinkholezine@yahoo.com

LEFT BACK # 2 / $2 (free to inmates)
This is mostly a political zine, written by an inmate dealing with the fuktupedness of the US prison industrial complex. I find it amazing that someone who is incarcerated could have the motivation and drive to put this out. It is awesome! The topics covered are obviously very close to the writer's heart, and it shows. Every word is carefully chosen and every story is filled with passion and conviction. I would recommend this to anyone who questions today's corrupt government, and especially to people who want to learn about the realities of prison life. Also, this may be very inspiring to other inmates. (BD)
Fanorama Society Distro / 109 Arnold Ave. / Cranston, RI 02905

LIFE DURING WARTIME #6 / $3
cassette & liner notes - 45 minutes, 10 pgs
Originally broadcast earlier this year on KBOO FM in Portland, OR, this audio zine looks at the immediate aftermath and lasting effects of a police raid on a punk party in said crusty capital in March 2001. Three people ended up facing bullshit kidnapping charges, but what's really scary is how the local cops and the FBI worked together to (try to) intimidate, harass, and photograph Portland kids in a search for anarchist "terrorists." Of course, being arrested and terrorized by the police and followed by a potential 20-year sentence is also pretty scary, and the three guys arrested talk a lot about the details of that night and the days, weeks, and lives that followed. Other involved punks describe the successes and challenges of organizing their community to give themselves some protection against the police. The liner notes by Iggy Scam provide good background and a broader perspective, and complement the tape nicely. This is a really great document, which benefits from being very well produced. (JM)
PO Box 1113 / Portland, OR 97207

LOST IN THE SUPERMARKET #1
4 x 5.5 – copied – 24 pgs
My hope was that this zine would take a humorous look at the dark and sinister nature of supermarkets and their effect on the larger world. And while it does cover that and more, it just didn't really move me to any sort of reaction. The articles in *Lost in the Supermarket* cover "club cards," shoplifting, and the politics of food. There's also an out-of-place article about libraries. Kind of odd. (CR)
no address

MINE #2 / $3
7 x 8.5 – copied – 44 pgs

It seems like more and more women are writing about their experiences with abortion in zines these days. These shared experiences are not only helpful to other women who might be making the choice to have an abortion, and cathartic to the writers, but also an affirmation of the importance of reproductive rights and health care accessibility to all women. A lot of these stories are sad—there's a lot of confusion, isolation, and mixed emotions, and I couldn't help but think that a lot of these women would probably benefit from therapy to get through the experience (of course, then we're back to talking about health care accessibility!) Meredith is looking for submissions for future issues too. (MD)
Meredith Stern / PO Box 7466 / Philadelphia, PA 19101
merrydef@yahoo.com

MODERN ARIZONA #4 / $1
Half of this zine consists of bathroom reviews: Taco Time, The Bronx Zoo, strip clubs, gas stations, movie theaters, etc. As bathroom reviews go, I suppose it's a pretty eclectic selection. My favorite part of the reviews are the tangents they sometimes inspire about bar fights, Nazi skinhead bosses, and stealing police cars. The other half of the zine is mostly a travel diary of Amsterdam that discusses beer, hash, and trying to avoid sex workers. I enjoyed this zine, but when I finished I was all, "I just read a zine of restroom reviews—what has my life become?" Good toilet reading, no doubt. (GZ)
PO Box 494 / Brewster, NY 10509
Unseen@bestweb.net

MONOBRUTAL #2 / 8 Euro
7 x 9 – printed – 41 pgs
I don't speak German, but I had my mom help me read some of this amazing comic and I also asked my friend Lisa to translate a little bit, and I can just tell by looking at the pictures that it fucking rules. Some of the comics are show reviews, some of them are interviews, and the rest are regular stories. The drawings are so cool I want to make stickers out of them, or shirts. Some of the stuff is in English, like interviews with the Phantom Limbs, Fleshies, and Rambo. Then there are supplementary comic interviews in German for each. Supposedly it comes with a Phantom Limbs 7", but Casey must have jacked it before he gave it to me for review. Still, this comic is enticing as hell. Basically, I have to learn to read German now. (JB)
virus@trans-solar.de

NYFRAELST #4 / $2
8 x 6 – copied – 44 pgs – Swedish
This seems at first glance to be a simple zine, because the artwork appears a bit primitive. But after looking at it for a while I realized the drawings had a lot to say. Anyway, there are articles on the bands Seein' Red, Lärm, Henrik Bromander, Pontus Lundkvist, and Nine Shocks Terror. There are also a few record and fanzine reviews. (HH)
Joel Abrahamamson / Sandgaten 15 / Palkenberge / Sweden
nyfralst@hotmail.com

PANIK #3 / $3
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 42 pgs
The self-proclaimed "only Danish DIY, punk/noise zine left" is energetic, a bit whiney, and full of bad art (not bad-good, but bad-bad). Issue 3 is from way back in 2002. Full of all of the usual stuff one comes to expect from a music-focused zine. The highlights are a Malaysian scene report (!) with contact info, and a funny look at dancing at shows. In this issue, Steffan switches to the English language, which he has a moderate grasp on. (SD)
Steffan Sorensen / Jaegersborggade 28 2.tv / 2200 Kobenhavn N / Denmark

PANIK #4 / $3
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 72 pgs
A few years later and the new *Panik* is fancier (nice heavy cardstock cover and higher grade paper on the inside) yet consistent with its content (and bad art). Interviews, interviews, interviews—enjoyable but basic. It includes an interesting chat with tape label BCT, the history of Christian Death, and an Asbest tour diary. Still in English. (SD)
Steffan Sorensen / Jaegersborggade 28 2.tv / 2200 Kobenhavn N / Denmark

PICK YOUR POISON #4 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 58 pgs
Autobiographical tales of life at the workplace (on both a permanent and temporary basis). They're all drawn from the life of a single author and read like the germ of a long, exhaustive autobiography—perhaps told in zine form. "The local Dairy Queen was infamous for hiring what appeared to be 11-year-olds, resulting in a maddeningly incompetent staff. Their age was probably closer-to-legal 14, but either way you got a pang of weird guilt when you ordered there, like you should be alerting the authorities instead of ordering a Blizzard." We trail the author around as he bounces from one short-term temp gig to another, acquainting himself with the fine art of goldbricking in an office environment. Ironically enough I'm writing this review under the same conditions...the zine's funny, true-to-life, and written with a good appreciation of the absurdity inherent in most/all gainful employment. (JH)
Nate Gangelhoff / PO Box 8895 / Minneapolis, MN 55408
www.pickyourpoison.net

PROOF I EXIST #4 / 50 cents
4.75 x 5.5 – copied – 29 pgs
Proof I Exist is innocently guarded and written under the auspice of full personal disclosure. Like so many personal zines, it is not open enough to be a true scope of a personality, but based in personal meanderings enough to have no other value. Zines like this are only for giving to people you know. If the writer would make connections between all the little stories, all of this might make some sense. In the introduction, the writer hopes that you might find something you can relate to. I didn't. (JB)
Billy / 1357 W. Augusta #1 / Chicago, IL 60622

PROPAGANDA #2 / $3 or 2 euros
5.5 x 8 – copied – 28 pgs
Do you know the difference between a pidgin and a creole? A pidgin is created when a group of multilingual people is forced (usually really forced, in colonial circumstances) to communicate with each other in the context of work. Not having the time to learn each other's languages, they create a working "language" from bits and pieces of their languages and the imperial language. It does the job, but without the flair and versatility of a "real" language.

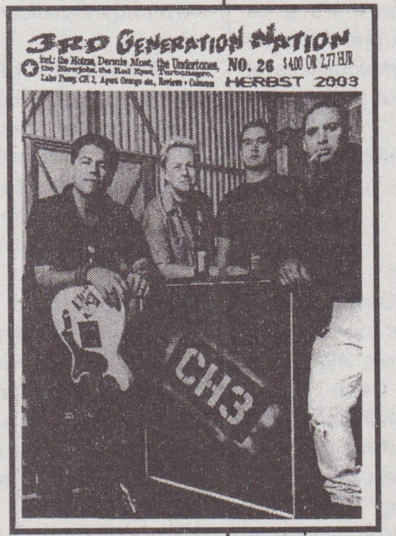
Here's the neat part: the babies of those pidgin-speaking workers, who grow up hearing the pidgin as one of their mother tongues, add to it all that grammatical quirk and elasticity, making, in one generation, a creole—a natural language—out of a temporary code. *Propaganda*, staffed by teen boys in the UK, reminded of this fascinating process. At first I was annoyed with the zine—if the only bands you care about are huge—on major or huge labels—then why not keep it to the internet and leave the little zines for the punks? But then I thought, maybe cutting and pasting the zine itself will lead them away from the message board and into the basement. Taking very hollow and patchy bits of cultural information, they are beginning to fashion their own voice. When they take it back entirely from VH1 and *Spin,* we'll know they're speaking our language. (AC)
PO Box 2837 / Calverton / Nottingham / NG14 6WU / UK
propagandazine@hotmail.com

RANCID NEWS #4 / $2
7 x 11 - printed – 80 pgs
So this is your typical underground style music rag, complete with columns that are fairly interesting, interviews with Rancid, The Locust, and Hot Water Music, to name but a few, and relentlessly honest record and zine reviews. I mean, these guys really don't pull any punches. Although this is a UK publication, it is dealing predominantly with the US punk/underground scene. Except for the part about Rancid, which is neither punk nor underground. (BD)
PO Box 382 / 456 - 458 The Strand / London / WC2R 0D2

RAZORBURN #1 / $2
8.5 x 11 - copied - 32 pgs
Brief first issue from these Columbus punx—I really like the mildly chaotic cut and paste layout—with plenty of original, moderately cartoony artwork. Features interviews with Henry Rollins (where he discusses authors he likes and comes off sorta confused that anyone might want to interview him), Greg Ginn (who talks to great lengths about his love of cats and ceramic cat figurines) and local artist Jeff Fernagle. Also included is a brief play and some poetry—both of which I could personally do without. I am a big fan of the collage art that is thrown around throughout the zine—it's nice to see, especially in this modern age of zines where everything is done on a computer. (MT)
2335 East Ave. / Columbus, OH 43202

RAZORCAKE #17 / $3
8.25 x 10.5 – printed – 112 pgs
Yet another serving of the substantial 'cake. This one has interviews with The Immortal Lee County Killers II, Grabass Charlestons, Red Onions, and everyone's favorite Confederacy of Scumbags, AntiSeen. There's also a piece in memory of Wesley Willis, and the standard record and zine reviews. As usual, the abundant columns are the best part of *Razorcake*, although you do have to pick and choose from 50 pages of them—I like Maddy's, and the debut column from Ben Snakepit (of *Snakepit* zine fame). The Grabass Charlestons interview is pretty great too. I'd say this is one of the better issues of *Razorcake* that's come out recently. Nice cover too! (CJ)
PO Box 42129 / Los Angeles, CA 90042
www.razorcake.com

RIVERWÜRST COMICS #1 / $3
8.25 x 10.25 – offset – 38 pgs
For mature audiences, they advise. *Riverwurst* is a collection of comics that range from spooky-ooky zombie shenanigans, punk rockishness, Satan on a rampage, and much more. "The Grays" and "Belly Button Blues" are standouts in my honest opinion, but all 'round this is a solid collection of up-and-coming DIY cartoonists. (JH)
PO Box 511553 / Milwaukee, WI 53203



SPARE CHANGE #15 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 40 pgs
I read *SC* in the van on the way down to San Jose. I had no real reason to go to San Jose, but there was a free ride and I needed a mini-vacation of brisk winter air and an aimless walk in a foreign place. The stories in *SC* are those that you would exchange while trapped in a van for a long trip. Remembrances of first jobs, first experiences getting drunk, coupled with those rambling little tales that don't quite have a point but are entertaining. Tom Foote tells these brief tales in a conversational tone laden with years of removal from the events told about. His humor is sparkling in small doses, but would probably become grating if you were actually trapped in a van with him for a long trip. For this short trip to San Jose, however, it was quite welcomed. (SD)
PO Box 6023 / Chattanooga, TN 37401

TALES OF MERE EXISTENCE / $10.50
8.5 x 11 – copied – 16 pgs plus DVD
I don't know if this really fits our review format, and it is pricey (and only available through the internet, which I hate)—but it's also fuckin' hilarious! I really loved the ennui and sarcasm in here. These simple comic strips in the zine convey all the self-deprecation and doubts that I think most of us feel. The DVD has short little animated movies that are also great. (MD)
www.ingredientx.com, illeverent@yahoo.com

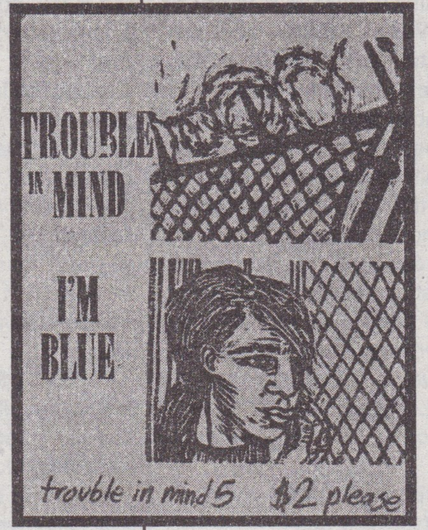
TEPID #1 / $4
8.5 x 11 – offset – 42 pgs.
Delicately rendered comic that bears some similarity (looks-wise) to Joe Sacco's *Palestine* or even Chester Brown's *Yummy Fur*...it's a vaguely ominous tale of moody childhood and broken hearts in the Little League dugout. Perhaps it's too introspective for some readers, or maybe the personal symbolism employed by the artist John Hankiewicz is just too esoteric for those not in the know. Still, it's a nice document from a guy with a nice sense of line, balance, and dramatic timing. (JH)
18 W. Traube Ave. / Westmont, IL 60559

3rd GENERATION NATION #26 / $5
8 x 11 – printed – 72 pgs = German
The cover of this issue features the band Channel 3. There is also an interview with this band, plus there are other interviews including such bands as Dennis Most of the Instigators, the Undertones, the Blowjobs,

Motras, Dropkick Murphy's, and Turbonegro. This zine also has lots of great gig reviews, some provocative columns, and plenty of new record reviews, and cool ads for buying your latest favorite record. As usual this zine is action-packed and a hell of a fun read. (HH)
Ralf Huenebeck / Grenzweg 66 / 47877 Willich / Germany
www.3rdgenerationnation.de

TOINEN VAIHTOEHTO #126 / $2
6 x 8 – printed – 32 pgs – Finnish
This small zine is loaded with lots of gig and record reviews. There is also an article on the history of punk in DC. Finally, the zine has plenty of ads. This zine is a good place for anyone interested in Finnish punk. (HH)
PO Box 1 / 65200 Vaasa / Finland
www.punkinfinland.net/tv

TROUBLE IN MY MIND #5 / $2
7 x 8.5 – copied – 52 pgs
The cover and the art made this zine look promising. Silkscreened cover, stencil and paper cutouts give *Trouble in my Mind* a great aesthetic quality. While the writing is good, the style of the zine is even better. Most of the writing is a critique of the anarchist, punk, and activist communities. It's not a total write-off of the punk communities, though—merely an urge to challenge ourselves more than we do. It's got a good message, even if it's a bit heavy-handed, with a lot of presumptions about the rightness and righteousness of anarchism and punk, and our place in the larger world. (CR)
Uptonogood, inc. / PO Box 44254 / Detroit, MI 48244
rustriot@yahoo.com



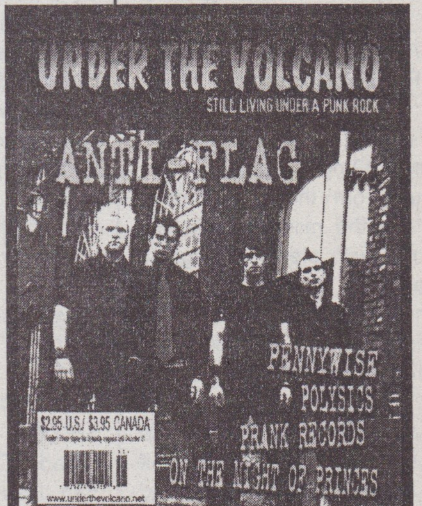
TRUST #102 / $5
8 x 11 – printed – 68 pgs – German
Another great issue of this long-running zine that includes interviews with Greg Ginn, Katrina del Mar, Dean Dirge, Topflappenhaekeln!, and Valensin. Also included are some informative columns, cool photos, plenty of new record reviews, and an outstanding gig listing. This zine is a definite must read for anyone interested in punk music. (HH)
PO Box 110762 / 28087 Bremen / Germany
www.trust-zine.de

UNDER THE VOLCANO
#76 / $2.95
8.25 x 10.5 – printed – 50 pgs
Despite the clever subtitle ("Still living under a punk rock"), I was pretty skeptical about this zine, which promised interviews with Pennywise and Anti-Flag. However, after reading it, I can safely assure you that *Under The Volcano* is, in fact, not lame. There are interviews with the Polysics, Ken Sanderson (of Prank Records), and On the Might of Princes, all of which are really great—the interviewer is obviously knowledgeable, and the questions are always appropriate and interesting. Even the two dubious aforementioned bands had something good to say. So don't judge this zine by its cover…it's actually pretty good. (CJ)
PO Box 236 / Nesconset, NY 11767
www.underthevolcano.net

UP MAGAZINE #12 / $7
11 x 8 – printed – 60 pgs – Dutch
There is lots of hardcore in this professional-looking zine from Holland. This issue includes interviews with Rancid, the Donnas, Immortal Lee Country Killers, Entombed, Hardcore Superstar, Give Up The Ghost, Cult Of Luna, Alkaline Trio, and others. There are also lots and lots of new record reviews, plus plenty of ads. And as usual the zine comes with a 20-song sampler that has some pretty rocking cuts. (HH)
PO Box 4269 / 5604 EG Eindhoven / Netherlands
www.upmagazine.nl

WE SWAY #1 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 40 pgs
Collage, clip art, assemblage, and various odds and ends found in unlikely places and bound together with staples. *Viola.* (JH)
PO Box 1802 / Harrisonburg, VA 22803

XEROGRAPHY DEBT #12 / $3
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 58 pgs
Reviewing a zine of zine reviews is like looking at a mirror inside of a mirror. There is a small twist with this one that actually works. Each reviewer (they all seem to be zine creators as well) has a column and the option to review using any format they like. My favorite reviewer is Donny Smith, who breaks the task of reviewing up into sub-categories. Some of the arbitrary facts he lists remind me of the reviews in *Beer Frame*. *XD* seems to be in that middle stage that many zine-reviews zines go through…still fueled with enthusiasm, but slowly overwhelmed by the volume of zines and work it takes to do the publication. (SD)
Xerography Debt / Davida Gypsy Brier / PO Box 963 / Havre De Grace, MD 21078



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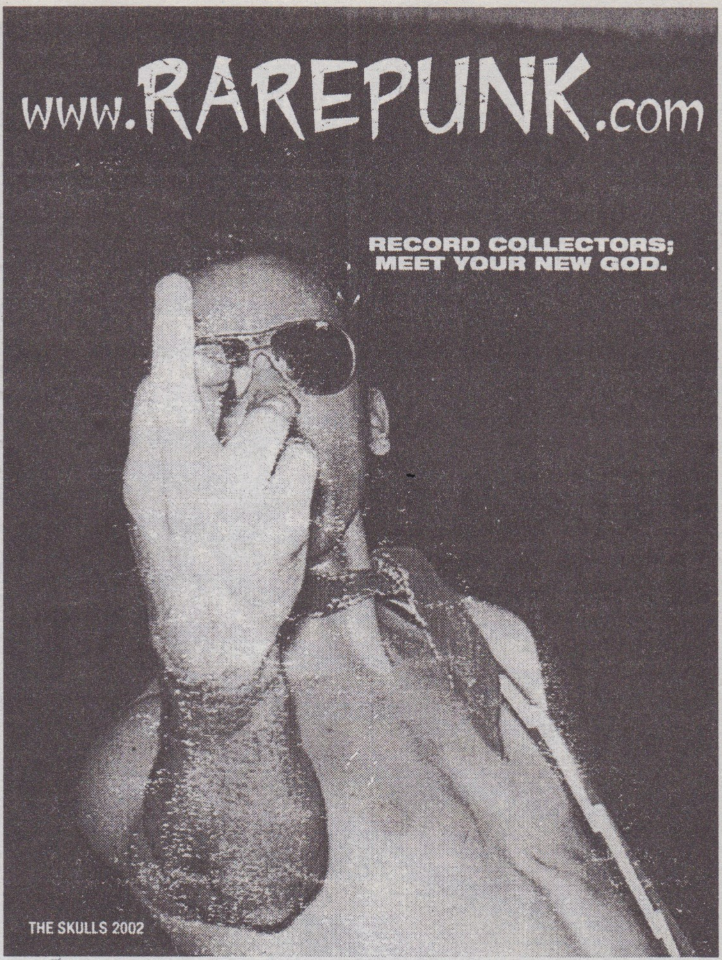

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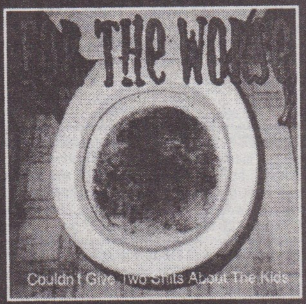

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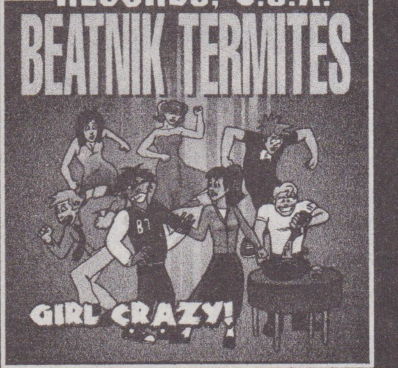

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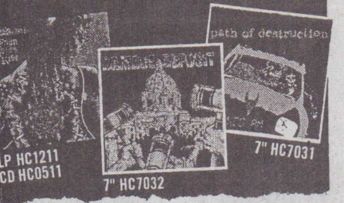

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READING PA SKATE PARK Anyone with info on the Reading, PA Skate Park, like when it was built or if they have photos they'd like to contribute, please get in touch at nineyearsafter.hotmail.com or write Nine Years After fanzine, PO Box 229, Reading, PA 19603.

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YOUNG PUNKS, quit dressing like the Casualties…you look stupid. Young punks, learn to play your instruments…make love to your axe! Quit playing like Gomer Pyle! Young punks, quit using the word "mosh" – it means DUMBASS! - Hardcore Texas Fuckin' James (MRR #233).

VETERAN PUNKROCK FAN AND ANIMAL LOVER facing 25 to life for drunken disorderly conduct. Would like correspondence with other chaos punx, scum fucks, hippy girls, freaks, animal people and anyone willing. Send some cheer to my stressful situation. Photos, flyers, zines, and all correspondence appreciated. Send to: Stephen Berenter XREF1483739 (4-W338), Sacramento County Jail, 6-51, I Street, Sacramento, CA 9581

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